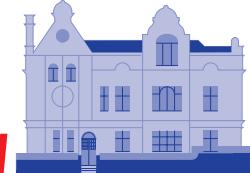


OSWESTRY & BORDER CHRONICLE



THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 2018

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TOP WHERE SOLD

MAJOR FIRMS IN BUSINESS PLEA

Report by Sue Austin

MAJOR Oswestry firms say they are backing ambitions to transform the town into a Business Improvement District – and are urging other businesses to support the plans in a key vote which opens today (Thursday).

The move has the potential to lever in an extra £1.5 million of funding to improve the town but the proposal must be given the go-ahead in a referendum which closes on February 22.

The launch of the five-year BID business plan was held at North Shropshire College last week and was attended by more than 100 people.

The proposal has won the support of many of Oswestry's smaller independent firms – and many of the town's key retail chains have revealed they are on board too. Bosses at Sainsbury's, Boots and Marks & Spencer are backing the move and are hoping all firms taking part in the postal referendum will vote yes.

Allister Moutrie, manager of Sainsbury's, said: "Oswestry is a wonderful town with a lot going for it. But it cannot be denied that

it needs a little push at the moment and I believe BID can do just that. BID will be good for the town's economy. We see real opportunities here to raise the game for Oswestry as a whole."

Adam Shilcock from Boots said: "I'm excited about the potential of bringing together Oswestry's business community in shaping a new economic future full of innovation and creative enterprise which really inspires and delivers real purpose and promise to the people of Oswestry."

BID bosses are looking for a 1.75 per cent levy from businesses to support the programme and, if the majority vote yes, each business with a rateable value of £12,000 and above will have to pay the levy. Properties with a rateable value of less than £12,000 will not be subject to a BID levy and therefore not have a vote.

However, Ian Follington, BID chairman, said all businesses below this threshold and those outside the BID area will be welcomed and encouraged to become involved.

He said: "We have some big companies in Oswestry on board with BID and we also have many independent, smaller businesses. BID will be run by businesses for businesses."

• Boost – See Page 5



Allister Moutrie

Couple ask us all to tread lightly on the planet



Diana Baur even takes her own greaseproof paper to Hartshorn Butchers in Oswestry to wrap her meat in as part of her plastic-free drive

A COUPLE who have spent the last two years working to cut plastic and waste from their lives to create the smallest footprint they can on the environment are urging others to do the same.

Diana and Rob Baur, who live in the Ceiriog Valley near Oswestry, have made dozens of changes to their lives, from using recycled glass jars for food storage to making their own toothpaste and shampoo.

And they say it is up to people of their generation to lead the way in saving the planet.

Both semi-retired, they say they have more time than most people to find ways to be greener.

Artist Diana, who has set up a Facebook page, Treading Lightly, called on grandparents to lead the change.

"Many of us have the health, time and resources to change the way we live," she said.

"We are the ones who can remember how our parents managed without a car or anything plastic, how they saved every scrap of paper, never wasted food, and made our

clothes, heeled our shoes and grew vegetables in the front garden.

"I began by taking paper bags to the Chirk greengrocer and only bought unwrapped fruit and vegetables. I take a re-usable lidded box, plastic yes but it's not in the sea, to the butcher on Oswestry market and ask that the meat be wrapped in my own greaseproof paper to take home in the box."

"It is one small step at a time, keep existing plastic containers and re-use them, just don't bin them."

TOURISM

Heritage railway is given a £120,000 boost from council

PLANS to develop a heritage tourist railway have received a major boost with a £120,000 grant.

Oswestry Town Council is to give the funds to the Cambrian Heritage Railways Ltd to develop a tourist railway between the town centre station and Weston.

There the railway would develop a visitor centre connecting to the adjacent Stonehouse Brewery. Passengers could also visit other places in the area.

Railway bosses say the attraction would bring in 20,000 visitors a year and an extra £1.28 million to the economy. Trustees say the figure could be even higher as most people would access and leave the railway via the station building in Oswald Road which, compared to some tourist railways, is a lot closer to the town it serves.

Work is dependent on structural improvements to the Salop Road bridge, work that Shropshire Council has pledged to carry out. Mayor Vince Hunt said: "The Cambrian was outlined as a must-do project about eight years ago and this is helping to deliver that and extend the track one and three quarter miles to the brewery at Weston."

Cambrian Heritage Railways chairman Rob Williams said the group was extremely grateful to the council for the support.

TRANSPORT

Station could be in line for revamp

PLANS are being drawn up for major improvements at Welshpool railway station.

The move has been prompted by a 127 per cent increase in passengers using the station.

Passenger numbers have increased significantly following the introduction of more rail services.

The plans could see a new building being constructed as well as improved ticket and information services being provided.

• Improvements – See Page 8

INSIDE

Cold snap hits motorists hard



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Report by Jonny Drury

CAR owners are being urged to contact police about all attempted thefts from vehicles – and not just post about them on social media – so officers can tackle the problem and catch the offenders.

Several reports have been made in and around the Oswestry area since the turn of the year.

A van was broken into in Llanforda Rise recently.

Meanwhile, a car had bottles of Lucozade stolen from inside after thieves broke their way into the vehicle.

The thefts have been reported on social media platforms and community Facebook pages.

But Tracey Ryan, policing inspector for Oswestry, said it was important the police were also informed.

Case

The officer said the police force wanted to hear about all incidents so action could be taken. She said although priorities had to be made, officers wanted to know about all incidents of crime.

She said: "What could be the case is the incidents are happening but people aren't reporting them to the police."

"Since the new year we have had 12 reports of theft in the area, but they are very random and not specifically related to cars."

"We are on patrol but we have to prioritise incidents that are of the highest risk and these types of thefts are not one of them."

"We haven't had as many reports since the new year, and maybe that is down to people not reporting them because they think all they will get is a crime reference number."

"You need to report the incidents so we can take action."

Inspector Ryan said there had been a spike in thefts from cars during the run-up to Christmas but the individual involved had been arrested, which had led to drop in such incidents being reported.

Freemasons do their bit for foodbank



Freemason David Towers hands over the cheque for £1,000 to Liz Jermy of Oswestry Foodbank to help families in need

BIG-HEARTED Freemasons have come together to donate to one of their town's good causes.

The three Freemason lodges based in Oswestry banded together to organise a donation drive over the festive period, encouraging members to put their hands in their pockets for the Oswestry and Borders Foodbank.

Liz Jermy, manager of the foodbank, said: "We are always very grateful for money donations as we can directly help a

person or family in crisis in collaboration with other agencies who identify the need, so we thank the Freemasons for thinking of us by giving the gift."

"The Oswestry Foodbank would like to take this opportunity to thank all their donors – many of whom prefer to remain anonymous – who so faithfully give food and money throughout the year, which can then be put to good use in helping the community."

The Lodge of St Oswald, based on Roff

Street, kicked off the idea of a festive donation drive late last year. Bernard Townson, the secretary of the lodge, said: "We contacted the other lodges and they readily agreed to support the initiative. As far as I am aware, this was the first time that the lodges have come together in this way, although we are all regular supporters of local charities in the Oswestry area in our own right. The generosity of the members has exceeded expectations, and we are delighted to have been able to assist."

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Revamp of alleyway is given the go-ahead

PLANS to transform an eyesore town centre passageway in Oswestry into a shopping arcade have been given the go-ahead.

The former Greggs restaurant in Church Street closed when the national chain moved into premises next door.

Now a planning application for the old building and its adjacent passageway has been approved by Shropshire Council.

Known locally as the "Baker's Oven" passageway it connects the town centre with English Walls and the Central Car Park, the town centre's main car park.

The ambitious plans will see the development of four retail units with Victorian type shop fronts opening onto the passageway.

The plans will also see a larger restaurant opening onto Church Street.

The development will also see the first floor of the building converted into three flats.

Oswestry Town Council welcomed the application saying the building was in desperate need of improvement.

"The plans will improve the appearance of Church Street and bring an historic Oswestry building back into use," councillors said.

"The mix of residential and retail units should be encouraged in other town centre sites."

Society to offer alternative view

OSWESTRY Civic Society is putting forward an alternative future for the town and what it could look like in 2050.

It is calling on people who would like to influence the way the town develops to attend a public meeting this evening (Thursday) at Holy Trinity Church in Roff Street. The meeting starts at 7pm.



We sell park homes for the over 50s retired and semi retired



Report by Andrew Morris

A KITCHEN worker who murdered a Shropshire cafe owner for his life savings has been jailed for more than 27 years.

Belkar Singh, 58, struck and stabbed his employer Satnam Singh Bligher, 67, more than 50 times at Tony's Diner on the A458 at Halfway House, between Shrewsbury and Welshpool, on June 25 last year, using a pan and knives.

He then took Mr Bligher's keys and went to his locked bedroom where his life savings were kept and stole £47,000 along with gold jewellery belonging to the family before fleeing the area.

The illegal immigrant was found guilty by a jury in an unanimous verdict following a six-week trial at Stafford Crown Court.

Judge Michael Chambers sentenced Singh to a minimum term of 27 years and 127 days imprisonment for the killing and said he was satisfied that it was a "premeditated, planned murder for gain".

The judge said: "The evidence which implicates you is overwhelming."

He told Singh that the loss of Mr Bligher, known locally as Mr B, to his family was tragic and unnecessary.

The judge said: "The reality was that he and his son showed you particular kindness, especially you as an illegal immigrant.

"They offered you board and lodgings and helped you to attend appointments in Birmingham."

"In June of last year you decided to kill him for his money with the intention of disappearance and starting a new life."

Singh, of Booth Street, Handsworth, Birmingham, repeatedly denied murdering the grandfather of four and claimed two other men were responsible.

Crews called to tackle bedroom fire



Crews from Oswestry and Ellesmere were called out to the house fire in Caer Road

AN investigation is underway to discover what caused a first-floor house fire in Oswestry.

Shropshire Fire and Rescue crews from Oswestry and Ellesmere were called to the blaze at a property on Caer Road shortly after midday on Wednesday last week.

When arriving at the scene, all people in the house were accounted for, and one male was treated by an ambulance crew for breathing in smoke. The flames were brought

under control in 20 minutes by the crews after the fire began in an upstairs bedroom causing damage to the room.

Smoke filled other areas of the house but the fire damage was confined to the bedroom, according to fire service spokesman Malcolm Stevens.

He also confirmed that an investigation was under way but there was nothing to suggest the fire was anything but an accident.

He said: "The fire began in the upstairs bedroom and the fire damage was confined to that room, however smoke filled the house."

"One man was dealt with for smoke inhalation by ambulance crews, however it was not serious."

Jamie Arrowsmith, of West Midland Ambulance Service, said: "We received a call at 12.06pm to a house fire in Caer Road. One male was treated for smoke inhalation and was discharged at the scene."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Quiz will raise money for RNLI

AN annual quiz in aid of the RNLI will be held in Oswestry on February 15.

It takes place at 7.30pm in the Wynnstay Hotel.

There are three team prizes to be won.

First prize is a £120 voucher for M&S.

Second prize is £40 in M&S vouchers and the third prize is four bottles of wine.

Entry forms to the quiz are available from Kevin Thomas, Lan-yon Bowdler, 39/41 Church Street, Oswestry, or by calling (01691) 663441.

Lib Dem leader Vince is to visit

LIBERAL Democrat leader Sir Vince Cable will visit Welshpool on Saturday.

Sir Vince will join recently elected Welsh Lib Dem leader Jane Dodds for a public question time in the Corn Exchange in Welshpool Town Hall at noon.

Mrs Dodds said: "In these uncertain times I am delighted that someone of Vince's experience and calibre is leader of the Liberal Democrats."

Pub reopens after blaze in chimney

A PUB was forced to close for more than 24 hours because of a chimney fire.

The Bridge Inn, in Chirk Bank near Oswestry, reopened on Saturday following the drama. Two crews from Oswestry were called to the pub at 10.55am on Thursday.

A statement on the pub's Facebook page said: "Due to huge chimney fire The Trap will be closed until Saturday day."

"It has caused minor smoke damage downstairs and the whole place will have to be cleaned, will do my very best to get it sorted as soon as possible."

A further statement on Friday confirmed industrial cleaners were helping and the pub would reopen.

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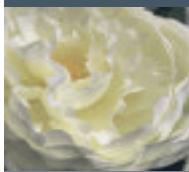


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First birth in re-opened maternity unit

OSWESTRY'S re-opened maternity unit has seen its first baby born.

Christie Kros gave birth to daughter Savannah on Saturday.

The birth took place in the mid-wife led unit housed at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital.

Christie and husband Graeme,

who run the MD Warriors martial arts organisation in Oswestry, said they are absolutely thrilled to have become parents.

She said: "I am delighted that we could have Savannah in Oswestry."

"We are totally in love with her."

The in-patient ward at the mid-

wife led unit, along with others in Bridgnorth and Ludlow, closed in the summer because of staff shortages at the consultant unit at the Princess Royal Hospital in Telford.

After the recruitment of nurses they reopened on January 1.

The opening in Oswestry was

however short-lived after it was closed for one night after further staffing issues.

The unit has now reopened again and campaigners who want to ensure all services remain at the unit in the future are asking all parents to consider giving birth at the site.

A5 improvement battle gets boost from minister

Report by Sue Austin

A CAMPAIGN to get the A5 dualled around Oswestry has received a boost.

A Welsh government minister has said he will do all in his power to help, working with counterparts on the Shropshire side of the border.

Transport minister Ken Skates revealed he is actively working to bring highway improvements. He said one major scheme at the Halton roundabout bottleneck, near Chirk, should be completed by 2021. And he revealed experts were working with Highways England

to ensure that any work can be dovetailed over the England and Wales border.

Mr Skates, whose constituency borders Shropshire, regularly drives along the A5 on his way to the Senedd in Cardiff. He said: "That is my route of choice and I know just how dangerous it can be. I have seen the single carriageway road being used as a dual carriageway – cars overtaking in both directions at the same time. I have even seen a car overtaking a car that was overtaking."

The minister said the road was constantly congested. "The 28 miles of single carriageway between Shrewsbury and Ruabon is not good for the economy on either side of the border," he said.

"The route between England and Wales along the A5 and A55 has the highest proportion of freight vehicles in Wales.

"I have been working with North Shropshire MP Owen Paterson to get improvements and I am organising a joint forum with Highways England and the highways department in Wales in the near future to discuss working together to draw up a package.

"This has never been done before."

The doors of Oswestry's oldest established inn have closed while a brewery searches for new occupants.

The current landlady at The Bell Inn in Church Street stepped down from her role last week. A spokeswoman for Punch Taverns said it was working to get the doors open again as soon as possible.

She said: "We can confirm that the Bell Inn is currently closed and the previous landlady has left the site.

"We are currently recruiting for a new publican and hope to have the pub open and trading at the earliest opportunity.

"We would like to apologise for any inconvenience this has caused to the local community."

The pub has had a host of occupants down the years and a major refurbishment of the pub took place in April 2016.

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Panto cash helps out hospice



The panto stars hand over more than £7,000 to Hope House Children's Hospice

THE CURTAINS may have closed on Theatre Severn's pantomime run of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, but it will leave a lasting legacy at Hope House Children's Hospice near Oswestry.

Leading dame and director Brad Fitt and Radio Shropshire 'baddie' Eric Smith organised a series of bucket collections over the Christmas period and have just presented the hospice with £7,792.

Vanessa Thomas from Hope House said it was a "staggering" sum to have raised and that the panto is close to the heart of the hospice. She said: "This incredible donation brings the amount raised by the panto over the years to more than £75,000 – and added to that is the fun and delight the children and staff at Hope House have had from visiting Brad and his cast and watching the pantos."

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Town 'could turn towards BID to boost its businesses'

Report by Sue Austin

BECOMING a Business Improvement District (BID) could allow Oswestry, which has lost 400 jobs over the last decade, turn the tide, it has been claimed.

Empty buildings, vacant sites and better traffic flow and parking are just some of the issues which need to be addressed, business leaders say.

Oswestry companies are being balloted over whether the area should be a BID town.

Call for the lowering of levy cut-off

LOWERING the cut-off for those eligible to contribute to a proposed Business Improvement District would be a fairer system, says an Oswestry businessman.

Commercial properties with a rateable value of £12,000 or more in Oswestry town centre or the industrial estate will pay a 1.75 per cent levy on their annual rates bill to go to the BID funding pot if the initiative goes ahead. It should bring in £1.5 million to spend on improving the town over five years. Yossi Glikman, who runs the Upstairs Downstairs store, praised the hard work of volunteers who have launched plans for the BID. He is calling for everyone with a business in town to be asked to make a pro rata contribution if a ballot vote is in favour of the initiative.

He said: "My concern is that not everyone will be on board with this because of the £12,000 cut-off. Anyone who has a rateable value on their property of less than that amount will not have to pay. They are the majority of business properties in the town centre. Yes, they might make a voluntary contribution but, if they had to pay just a small sum, they would make them much more likely to want to get involved and have their say in how BID spends the money."

If they vote yes it would mean each trader with a rateable value of over £12,000 would pay 1.75 per cent extra on their rates, bringing in £1.5 million in five years for improvement projects.

More than 100 people attended a meeting at North Shropshire College last week to hear details from those behind the initiative. Ian Follington, who is a professional business consultant and chairman of BID, said Oswestry needed a helping hand.

He said: "The area has lost 400 jobs since 2010, a six per cent drop. That is against the run of the rest of the county which has seen a three per cent increase in jobs.

"Yet we are in a prime location on the junction with the A5 and the A483, which should be a strong selling point to attract new businesses and to attract investment in existing businesses.

"We want to put Oswestry on the map and make the most of our prime location, the main route into Wales. We are not trying to turn Oswestry into a Telford but instead build on the pluses that we already have.

"We want to attract some big names but also we want to see the town as a place for starter businesses and entrepreneurs, whether young people setting up their first project or someone growing a farm or kitchen table business."

The meeting was told the result of extensive surveys and workshops that have asked the local traders and companies their views on what is needed for the town. Traffic was one main sticking point.

"If someone digs a hole in the road or it rains, then the whole town gets snarled up," Mr Follington said. The ballot opens today (Thursday). Ballot papers will be issued to eligible businesses to be returned by post. Votes must be received by 5pm on February 22 to be counted.

Generous team's hospice help



Site operatives Richard Oakley and Francis Williams with the cheque and money
A TEAM of workers at one of Veolia's household waste recycling centres has raised £1,000 to help a hospice in Shropshire throughout the county. In the last year alone the hospice cared for more than 130 patients from Oswestry, bosses said.

Lucy Ruff, fundraising manager for Severn Hospice, said: "We are so grateful to the crew at Oswestry Household Recycling Centre for their generous donation.

The hospice provides specialist care and support free of charge to families across Shropshire and north Powys who are living with an incurable illness.

John Welsby, supervisor for Veolia, said: "We have a fantastic team here at Oswestry Household Recycling Centre and they are incredibly generous. Severn Hospice do wonderful work

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BREEZE ABOUT TOWN

Talk of relocating Welshpool's market from the town hall to a car park has stirred up a hornet's nest of protest this week with all the tenants signing up to an online petition.

The town council owns the town hall and operates the market which is open for six days of the week and it was the council which carried out controversial changes to the market stalls a few years back. Even the Queen popped in for a look when she visited the town. Now the plan is to line one side of Church Street Car Park with "hut style" market stalls which councillors claim will increase trade and attract more people to visit the town centre when they shop at the Tesco, Aldi and B&M stores.

Talks with Powys County Council about the proposal are at a very early stage with any development hinging on the county authority agreeing to the car park being utilised, but the real question is whether the idea is a good one or not.

I have never found the current market an inviting location and many have criticised the layout. And while the town council has managed to keep the stalls occupied there is no doubt that across the country the very concept of markets is fading. Market life may very soon be a thing of the past.

Emptying the ground floor of the town hall would probably create enough space to rehouse the council's own offices and staff while creating other areas for public use, but there will be a price to pay. This development will come at a cost.

I've been approached by a lot of people since the press broke the story that the market may be on the move – some in favour but most against. The town council likes to consult with residents and when the time comes this is probably a topic which demands a poll of public opinion.

Great news this week that the project to commemorate World War One poet Wilfred Owen has won a £41,000 grant from the National Lottery.

Over the last three years Shropshire communities have been working in partnership to deliver a programme of heritage and arts activities to commemorate the centenary of the Great War, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England. This programme, called Wilfred Owen 100, focuses on Oswestry, and will remember him with poetry readings, music, talks, new installations such as a mural at Shrewsbury station and themed guided walks.



Hospital fire images show race to save patients

TOBY NEAL reports on a fire 70 years ago which devastated the county's orthopaedic hospital

SEVENTY years ago this month a Shropshire hospital went up in flames and a desperate race began to save the patients.

The drama and heroism of that night of January 27, 1948, was captured in a series of stunning images.

A large part of the Shropshire Orthopaedic Hospital at Gobowen was reduced to a charred and twisted wreck. But tragedy was averted. Despite the rapidity of the blaze, nurses and civilian and military helpers got all of the patients to safety before the flames reached their wards.

Amid it all, a photographer on the spot captured the action and the aftermath.

He was Geoff Charles, whose remarkable collection comprising tens of thousands of images is now held by the National Library of Wales, which describes his archive as one of its treasures.

Over 50 years Charles captured life and drama in North and Mid Wales and the borders area, and also took photos in Shropshire.

His photographs appeared in various newspapers, but he is best known for his work with the Welsh language national paper Y Cymro.

These pictures are used courtesy of the NLW, which has given permission for their use. They also appear on the Memories of Shropshire Facebook group.

The blaze saw staff push patients out into the road on their beds and then take them to Derwen College and a military



camp nearby. The hospital was to rise phoenix-like from the ashes to become today's centre of excellence as the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Hospital.

Charles took dozens of photos during and immediately after the fire, showing the efforts to fight the flames, patients being wheeled to safety, and children being cared for after being rescued.

He also photographed the damaged wards and the start of clearing up and rebuilding. A selection of the pictures were used in a pamphlet used as part of an appeal seeking to raise £100,000 which was launched after the fire.

Here is how the contemporary Wellington Journal & Shrewsbury News reported the events: "Within a few hours on Tuesday night fire laid a large portion of Shropshire Orthopaedic Hospi-

tal near Oswestry in ruins. Nurses and helpers, by their promptness and speed, saved the whole of the 500 to 600 patients before the fire reached their wards. It was a rapid and devastating

"While the flames lighting up the sky mounted to more than 50ft and falling woodwork marked the onward progress of the fire along the wards, the nurses and helpers pushed the beds, with their patients in them, into the roads and lined the beds up in pouring rain.

"Mackintoshes and waterproof sheets were placed over the beds as far as possible.

"Meanwhile officials were busy organising the reception of the patients at the Derwen Cripples Training College and the military camp at Park Hall,

Oswestry, and as soon as that organisation was completed bands of soldiers and civilians aided nurses to push the beds, with their patients in them, about half a mile along the road in the darkness to the college and the camp, where they were accommodated for the night.

"Fortunately all the patients were saved unharmed.

"The heroic work of the nurses and the hospital staffs was the admiration of all, and they toiled unceasingly until all patients were accommodated for the night in their temporary quarters. It was work well done in darkness and rain and all patients were under cover by ten o'clock.

"Oswestry, Shrewsbury and the military fire services were engaged in a big task in battling against a conflagration which lit up the sky for miles around."

Charles was born at Brymbo in 1909 and was initially a reporter, including for the now defunct Wrexham Star in the 1930s when one of his scoops was reporting on the Gresford Colliery disaster.

becoming a competent photographer, he took over the management of the photographic section of Woodalls Newspapers.

The NLW website says: "He shortly afterwards moved to Newtown to run the Montgomeryshire Express where he encountered a promising young reporter called John Roberts Williams for whom he was to illustrate stories for Y Cymro."

Occasional work for Y Cymro started in 1937 and resumed in earnest after the war when Williams was appointed editor.

Charles retired in 1975 but continued to contribute articles and photographs to Y Cymro and Farmers Weekly on a freelance basis. He donated his collection of 120,000 negatives to the National Library of Wales.

WORKING FOR YOU



The National Health Service is struggling to cope with this winter's pressures. This is inevitable. It will never be possible for the NHS to meet the demands of a growing population, an aging population, and the advance of clinical science. This is worsened when the cost of healthcare is combined with the cost of social care – increasing for the same reasons – plus today's growing expectation that 'the State' should take responsibility for the frail elderly rather than it be a family responsibility. We must be realistic about what is possible.

Let's try to understand why funding the NHS has become such a challenge in recent years. The NHS was established 70 years ago. From 1947 to 2010, the NHS budget increased by an average of four per cent per year – in real terms. From 2010, the budget has continued to increase in real terms, but only marginally. Because of the reasons above creating new financial pressures, there is an inevitability that difficulties meeting the exponentially growing demand would emerge. That's where we are now, and where we will be next year as well, despite evermore Government injection of more money.

What deeply frustrates all of us is wasted spending. Over recent days, we have seen much written about partnerships between the public and private sector to deliver new capital projects. There is nothing inherently wrong about a joint arrangement involving public and private investment, but there were many very bad deals done in the late 1990s and in the early 2000s. We are signed up to spending many billions on these deals.

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Glyn Davies
Montgomeryshire MP

Letters

Move into retail sector is a bad idea

I AM glad to read that councillors are horrified by the adventurism of the county council cabinet into retail investment.

Perhaps some financial responsibility may now prevail at County Hall. From its Treasury Policy Document, the council is already borrowing money and interest rate risk on these liabilities appears to be un-hedged. At a time of increasing interest rates to unknown levels the council is proposing to invest in a highly speculative

asset, retail development in Shrewsbury. Perhaps our council friends should take a walk around our towns and see the quantity of empty retail premises.

Economic forecasts are for our rate of economic growth to fall from 1.6 per cent to 1.1 per cent, primarily driven by reduced retail consumer demand. As interest rates increase, so our debt burdened population will spend less and less on goods and services and more on interest.

Footfall in the retail sector is also reducing because of more online shopping. The price of oil is again on the rise, adding to inflationary pressures which will again reduce the demand side of our economy.

How many more negative investment signals for the retail sector must be ignored before our council cabinet eventually sees sense?

PETER CARTLEDGE
Tetchill

Back to the days when pitches were not so flat!



Just look at the state of that pitch! This is a match between Oswestry Town Reserves and Wem Town in 1947. This picture is from the Geoff Charles Collection held at the National Library of Wales. Geoff Charles was a prolific photographer with a long career who was based for some time at Oswestry.

Vote in Ireland might help ease May's problems

WHILE never having been a supporter of Theresa May I have felt that she, as our Prime Minister, should receive our support in dealing with the decision of the British people to exit the European Union.

Unfortunately, Mrs May has made too many wrong decisions.

A disastrous election when she chose to try to win it on her own and failed miserably and a dodgy deal to retain power with the totally untrustworthy Democratic Unionist Party, which has now come back to haunt her in her talks with Europe. And she was warned!

Given that the Northern Ireland people voted to stay in the EU shouldn't they now be given the option to vote on the reunification of the island of Ireland?

This could possibly resolve the position that Mrs May now finds herself in with border controls.

Personally, given the way the world is moving I think it is only a matter of time before Ireland is reunified anyway.

ADRIAN WILLIAMS
Bratton

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Readers' Letters,
The Chronicle,
14 Salop Road,
Oswestry, SY11 2NU

EMAIL

iain.stjohn@
shropshirestar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Tough being on the real treadmill

TIRED of the treadmill of work? Some 200 years ago you may have been had you been in Brixton prison and used their actual treadmill.

Those serving hard labour held a bar at chest height while walking up a stepped revolving wheel to grind corn for up to 10 hours a day, with 24 prisoners in a row on the same machine. The prisoners had a 12-minute break every hour but the machine kept working as some were allowed off and new prisoners joined.

PETER STEGGLES
Longnor

Time to look at re-nationalisation of our railways

AGAIN commutes are being hit with above inflation increases in rail fares of 3.4 per cent.

I'm afraid it's now time to start the re-nationalisation of the railways as promised by Labour in their election manifesto.

We did it with East Coast, and when East Coast was brought under public ownership, do you know what happened?

It became the most efficient railway in the country.

At the moment private railway franchises are run for shareholders and they do very well from the system.

Figures in 2015 show that train operators paid more than £200 million in dividends, with Richard Branson's Virgin Rail paying £40 million. This still hasn't stopped him suing the NHS in Surrey for £2 million for rejecting his privatisation plans. Some fares, namely the London to Bristol return fare, have risen by an eye watering 245 per cent since privatisation.

ADAM SHIPP
Shrewsbury

Can't see the logic in the council buying the centres

I WAS horrified to read about Shropshire Council's decision to purchase the Charles Darwin and Pridge Hill Centres and buy the lease on the Riverside.

While the areas of both centres adjacent to the town centre have prospered, the lower storeys have always failed to attract the necessary footfall to make them viable.

Since the existing tenants, particularly the supermarket, left the Riverside the remaining shops are hardly likely to inspire. Anybody who follows the reports of the major retailers knows increasingly their traffic has moved online.

John Lewis, one of the first to establish an internet presence, is reducing store openings. Both Debenhams and Primark were mooted as potential for the Riverside. Primark moved into the Darwin Centre.

Obviously both realised a store on the outskirts of the main area was not viable.

The fact is that while the centre is thriving the shops on the periphery struggle.

This is not peculiar to Shrewsbury and many towns do far worse. In an era of cut budgets, which decimate local services, this seems impossible to justify.

Increasingly high business rates are already discouraging shop owners.

The swimming pool will need large capital expenditure.

One can only ask who is to benefit from this – not Shrewsbury. We will be left with a highly expensive White Elephant which will soak up money on maintenance apart from the potential costs of developing the site. The era of the large shopping mall outside of the major conurbations is no longer viable.

Traffic and logistics and simply the number of available shoppers argue against such a plan.

HUGH CUTLER
Shrewsbury

Enforce rules of the roads

YOU have reported incidents where speed sensors have clocked drivers driving at excessive speeds in speed restricted areas.

Local councillors complain that more should be done to deal with these issues and they promote further traffic calming. This approach won't work. The issue is one of enforcement of the speed limits. Why aren't the councillors demanding a far more intense police presence? Only heavy fines and loss of licence by offending drivers will make any difference. Who wants to see his name in the papers reporting conviction for this anti-social behaviour?

Police presence in our villages is practically non-existent and drivers know it.

JAMES BELL
Market Drayton

Mill Rythe Movies & Musicals

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Mill Rythe Holiday Village, Hayling Island

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Monday 26th: We travel directly to Mill Rythe Holiday Village for check-in and time to relax before your evening meal which is followed by the show cast performing a in-house show. Tuesday 27th: After breakfast we head to the dynamic waterfront city of Portsmouth, proud to boast an unrivaled naval and maritime heritage. You will have plenty of time to visit all the must see attractions here including the famous historic harbour - home to three historic British warships, spinaker tower, museums, galleries and unique places to shop and eat. Entertainment tonight will be a cabaret.

Thursday 28th: Free time to enjoy the plentiful facilities that Mill Rythe has to offer. This evening enjoy a cabaret.

Thursday 1st: Today's excursion is to Winchester. Explore the medieval streets of Winchester and admire the history of Winchester Cathedral and Wolvesey Castle before strolling along the River Itchen. This evening the Show cast will be performing a in-house show.

Friday 2nd: We leave after breakfast and make our way home.

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Land is sold for £800k by trust

A PARCEL of land has been sold in Welshpool for more than £800,000.

Land at Red Bank in Welshpool is owned by the Burgess Land Trust, which is run by Welshpool Town Council, and has been sold to an unknown developer for a fee in excess of £800,000.

The trust was set up in 1761 with two objectives – to maintain buildings and council buildings, and when the objective is met any surplus would be made available for the poor and needy.

Recently almost £300,000 was made from selling off 25 acres of agricultural land.

The land at Red Bank involved in the latest deal already has planning permission for 24 houses which made it an attractive proposition for potential buyers.

Choir on look out for accompanist

A SINGING group is on the hunt for a new choir accompanist.

Guildford Singers, based near Welshpool, has started rehearsals for its spring concert under its new musical director, Paul Wardell, who was previously the choir's accompanist.

This leaves the choir searching for a replacement for him for rehearsals and some concerts.

The mixed choir of around 40-50 people meet every Thursday at Guilsfield Old School and performs four to six times a year in Welshpool, Guilsfield, and the surrounding area.

The choir's repertoire includes music from the 16th to 21st centuries, sacred and secular, serious and light-hearted, folk songs and spirituals, cantatas and carols, requiems, and medleys from musicals.

More information is available on jen.stocking@btinternet.com

Report by Jonny Drury

AN increase in the number of people using rail services has prompted a proposal for a new building at Welshpool railway station.

Since the introduction of more services going to Shrewsbury on the Cambrian rail line, Welshpool Railway Station has seen a 127 per cent increase in passengers using the station, which offers little more than a shelter at the moment.

Following a comment made in the town's latest plan, Town Clerk Robert Robinson has worked to draw up plans after conversations with Network Rail.

Councillors discussed the proposed plans for a station building at a planning meeting last week ahead of moving on to the next stage.

Mr Robinson insisted the plans were at an early stage.

He said: "They are at a very early stage at the moment, but we have had some plans and designs drawn up."

"It actually came from a comment in the town plan, and Network Rail told us if we wanted something, go away and draw some plans up."

The plans centre around a possible station building that would give people a facility to get their tickets, and various pieces of information about train times, and disabled access."

The plans have also been passed on to the Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Passengers Association. Back in 2015, an investment of over £30,000 was made at the station to increase the car parking available.

More information is available on jen.stocking@btinternet.com

MID Wales firms are missing out on millions of pounds a year in public sector procurement contracts, a local politician has warned.

New figures uncovered by Montgomeryshire Assembly Member Russell George reveal that less than half of all local authority spending on goods and services went to Welsh firms while the Welsh Assembly figure was 52 per cent.

In 2015/16 local authorities in Wales spent more than £3 billion on goods, services, social care and construction projects.

In addition, the Welsh Government spent more than £670 million in the same areas.

Mr George said he was concerned by the low proportion of contracts being won by Welsh firms.

He said: "The Welsh Government's procurement strategy appears to be failing Welsh firms, and that impact is being keenly felt within local supply chains."

Despite substantial sums being invested by Welsh Government to improve procurement outcomes, Mid Wales firms are still missing out on millions of pounds at both a Welsh Government and local authority level.

"We need to see a meaningful uplift when the next figures are published."

"Small and medium enterprises are the lifeblood of the Welsh economy, and they are being failed by the Welsh Government."

He said the key figures included less than 50 per cent of all local authority spending on goods and services being won by Welsh firms and said only 52 per cent of Welsh Government spend on goods and services went to Welsh-based firms with £197,239,813 leaking out of the Welsh economy.

Mandy's purge on plastic goes viral



Mandy Price with pupils Jac Herbert, Scarlett Vaughan and Isabella Morris

INSPIRED by Sir David Attenborough, Mandy Price and her daughter Becky decided to do their bit for the environment.

During a visit to a beach they spent a few minutes picking up washed-up plastic.

They decided to share their actions online, particularly in the light of the documentary Blue Planet 2, which brought the issue of sea pollution to an audience of around 10 million.

Branding their mini campaign #dofitfordavid, they expected a little local interest from their home town of Oswestry.

But, just a few weeks later, their posts have been shared 125,000 times and counting.

Mandy, Oswestry School's art and drama teacher, said she has been amazed by the response following their visit to the beach on the Abersoch coast. And her campaign has been taken on by her pupils, who have been made aware of the issue and have even set about collecting discarded plastic from the streets of their town.

She said: "If everyone started to pick a bit up a little bit of plastic when they went for a walk, these small steps could escalate into a positive planet saver. People may not do it for us but they might do it for Sir David Attenborough."

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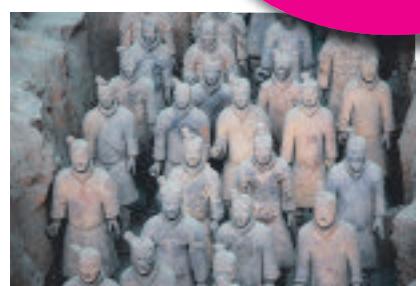
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Warning is issued to council over its service

A FRESH warning notice has been issued to a council over its failing children's services.

Powys County Council met Welsh Government ministers last week where they were given details of the warning and what needs to be done to address the concerns.

The follow-up warning comes after a damning report published in October by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) which found that children had been put at risk by failings in the department.

The council set aside £4 million to rectify the problems and has now asked for more funding.

The council submitted an improvement plan but the Minister for Children and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies said further improvements are needed. The fresh warning comes after the CSSIW returned to the department for a monitoring visit in December. Mr Irranca-Davies said there were early signs of improvement, some improved practice, and areas where new arrangements had been put in place, but they had not yet become fully embedded.

Powys County Council's Leader, councillor Rosemarie Harris said: "The improvement plan forms the basis of a three-year programme of change. Our goal is to move Powys from its current position to one of real strength and exemplary performance. We realise this will require considerable effort and we are realistic about the challenge ahead."

"It will take time and resources to re-shape children's services and this programme will be reflected in our second improvement plan, which will be submitted to inspectors on February 7."

Report by Deborah Hardiman

A MAN who racked up almost £3,000 in debt on his mother's credit card without her knowledge has been given a suspended jail term for fraud.

Andrew Owen, of Gobowen near Oswestry, took the M&S card from the family's home in Perry Road, and used it to go shopping and buying petrol over a two-month period.

The 39-year-old, who was on licence, was rumbled when his mother received her bill totalling £2,853, and reported the crime to the police.

Owen, who has long standing drug issues from age 17, was temporarily returned to prison following the latest arrest.

Trevor Meegan, prosecuting barrister, said: "The defendant took the card and made a number of transactions between July and August by cash withdrawals, shopping at stores in the Oswestry area."

Having previously denied an offence of fraud by false representation between June 30 and September 1, 2017, Owen changed his plea to guilty ahead of his trial on December 1.

The painter and decorator has previous convictions dating to the 1990s including ones for drug offences and burglary.

Jasvir Mann, mitigating, said: "He should have pleaded guilty earlier. He tells me he is now sober and clean."

Owen was sentenced to 30 weeks jail, suspended for 18 months at Shrewsbury Crown Court. He must attend drug rehabilitation for nine months, carry out 100 hours unpaid work in the community and complete a 20-day activity programme.

Son racked up £2,853 on his mother's card

Students secure Oxbridge places



Lily Mainwaring and Georgina Lang are among the four Oxbridge students

FOUR students from Moreton Hall School near Oswestry are celebrating after securing offers from Oxford and Cambridge universities.

Selina Schoelles, Alicia Holland, Georgina Lang and Lily Mainwaring will study subjects ranging from history to medicine.

Supported by Moreton Hall's head of Oxbridge enrichment, Matthew Dennison, and subject teachers, the girls undertook a rigorous process of college exams and interviews.

Having secured A level grades last year, Selina will take her place at Somerville College to read history while Alicia will embark on archaeology and anthropology at St Hugh's.

Georgina is one of only seven candidates to be offered a place on the prestigious and competitive computer science and philosophy course at Hertford College.

Lily has achieved her long held ambition of studying medicine at Cambridge.

Principal Jonathan Forster said: "The girls' hard work and passion for their subjects has been rewarded.

"This is a magnificent achievement and I commend the girls on their success."

NEWS IN BRIEF

College to host careers event

NORTH Shropshire College is preparing to host a careers event.

It will take place on Wednesday next week at the Oswestry Campus and on Thursday next week at the Walford Campus, near Baschurch.

Both events will run from 2pm-6pm and are open to everyone, with no need to pre-book. The event has already attracted a great number of exhibitors including Arla, Caterpillar and Energize, and hopes to give students, secondary pupils and members of the public the chance to find out more about further study and career opportunities. Business development manager Jo White said: "The careers fair is an excellent way for both our students and the public to engage with exhibitors and find out more about the opportunities available to them."

Sustainability 'is a major priority'

PLAID Cymru has pledged to put sustainability at the heart of Powys County Council in 2018.

The group gained its first seat on the council in 2017 and joined with the Green Party to tackle issues relating to Powys. Group leader Councillor Elwyn Vaughan has called for communities to be made sustainable in 2018.

He said: "During 2018 we want the council to send a clear message that they place the principle of sustainability at the heart of its activities and vision for the future."

"We are well aware that the council faces challenges, the need for clear values and principles are therefore as important as ever as the foundation for the future."

He also called for reducing waste and plastic in schools and offices, and working towards the Welsh Government goal of having a million Welsh speakers by 2050.



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Last chance for tickets

THE last few remaining tickets for the annual senior citizens new year party at Welshpool Town Hall are available from Welshpool Jewellers or Flaunt It card shop.

The party is open to anyone over the age of 60 from Welshpool and surrounding villages.

It will be held on Tuesday at 2pm with doors open at 1.30pm.

Three top acts will make up the star studded entertainment including celebrity guests hosted by local personality Alan Crowe.

The entertainment will be followed by a sumptuous buffet and bumper raffle.

Fundraiser will back 1940s event

AS a fund raiser towards this year's Welshpool 1940s Weekend, the organisers are holding a 1940s Evening at the Church House in Welshpool on Saturday, February 3.

Featuring vintage vocal trio the Bluebird Belles, the evening will also include archive film clips, a spitfire fund tombola and much more.

Tickets are £10 in advance or £12 on the door.

The cost of the tickets include a winter warmer supper plus puddings.

Tickets are available from Welshpool Jewellers or by calling 07782 166342.

A spokesman for the organisers said "For those who are not sure what to expect from a 40s night this one promises to be an ideal introduction".

Vintage dress civilian or military is encouraged but not compulsory.

Council does its bit to help re-settle refugees

Report by Jonny Drury

POWYS County Council took in the third highest number of refugees out of all Welsh councils last year with a further six families set to be re-homed.

New figures have shown that Powys re-homed a total of 32 refugees in the last year, with only Carmarthenshire, 51, and Swansea 33, re-homing more.

Refugees taken in 20 of the 22 local authorities were from Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Sudan, Turkey, Afghanistan and Somalia, with Merthyr Tydfil and Neath Port Talbot the only two councils not to accept refugees.

The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme that was set up with funding from the Home Office, saw 12 families successfully re-homed in Newtown and Ystradgynlais.

An evaluation of the scheme found that families felt safe in their homes, and had progressed well, learning English, with refugees in Newtown putting on a feast at the town's food festival in September.

Kirsty-Davies Warner, head of Oxfam Cymru said the charity is pleased with the way Wales has responded to the refugee crisis.

She said: "Since 2015, when we first called on Wales to resettle Syrian refugees, each local authority has done so. The majority of which had no previous experience of resettlement and have since gone above and beyond, taking in more people than they originally pledged to resettle."

Concerns voiced over care blueprint



Mario Kreft has voiced concerns about a blueprint for care in Wales

A NEW blueprint to improve social care for vulnerable people in Powys will fail unless more money is pumped into the system, it has been claimed.

Mario Kreft, the chair of Care Forum Wales, which represents hundreds of private providers, spoke out following the publication of the Parliamentary Review of Health and Social Care in Wales. The report sets out the government's vision for the future provision of services against a background of rising demand and increasing public expectations. Mr Kreft welcomed the overall findings of the review but was concerned its remit excluded funding and "failure to properly address the fundamentally important issue of funding" would prevent the recommendations being put into practice. He said: "There are 10 key recommendations in the report and I believe the most important of these is a new model of care offering a holistic system and seamless service focusing on the individual receiving care.

"This means health and social services working together rather than separately as at present."

Farmer in plea over opinion on bovine TB

A FARMER believes public opinion needs to change when it comes to culling badgers due to bovine TB.

Peter Lewis, a councillor in Llanfyllin and a farmer on the edge of the town, has been speaking after figures showed that around 20 per cent of badgers picked up on the English/Welsh border have TB.

He said the majority of public opinion was against badger culls, and that needed to change. He said: "People living in towns and other places don't realise the impact TB has on farms and cattle, so public opinion needs to change, that is one of the problems.

"Around one in five badgers picked up on the border have the disease."

"Culls do work, and maybe other avenues need to be looked at such as vaccinations, but the way the public views culling needs to be changed."

The area on the English/Welsh border and the South West Wales area are two parts of Wales where there is a high level of bovine TB.

Councillor Lewis's comments come after it was confirmed almost 20,000 badgers had been culled in England last year to prevent the spread of the disease.

Culling is part of the government's 25-year strategy to eradicate the disease, but people against the culls say there is no evidence it works. Claire Bass of the Humane Society International UK claimed it was cruel and pointless to massacre the animals, with the badger trust calling on conclusive evidence to show the cull was reducing the level of bovine TB.

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Valentine's Day is fast approaching and lovers in the area will be looking at how they can prepare for the special day.

Going out for a romantic meal is probably most people's idea of a great Valentine's Day gift.

The Oswestry and Welshpool area is blessed with a wide variety of fantastic venues which offer a perfect setting for a Valentine's Day treat.

The region has plenty of superb hotels and pubs where you can dine with your loved one.

The region also has a wide range of businesses which offer spa and beauty treatments too to make this Valentine's season one to remember.

What can be better than treating your loved one to a relaxing day in the spa?

Or how about a bit of both?

A nice relaxing and luxurious treatment in the spa and then a meal out afterwards?

Many of our hotels do great deals to suit all your needs.

Hotels in the area pull out all the stops to ensure your Valentine's Day treat is perfect.

If it is that special Valentine's Day present you are looking for, then the Oswestry and Welshpool area has plenty of top quality gift shops for you to find that magical something.

Our area has many independent shops which sell incredible gifts at great prices – perfect for a Valentine's Day present.

Beauty treatments you can try at home make great Valentine's Day gifts.

Scented salts and aromatherapy oils are particularly popular.

It doesn't have to be complicated.

All you need is warm water and a dash of something scented, chosen according to your bathing desires, be that pure relaxation, stress relief or to soothe aching muscles.

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Bathing oils are a great Valentine's Day gift – and will help get you ready for a Valentine's meal out

Some are even helpful if you are struggling to sleep.

If you are struggling to get your requisite seven hours of slumber then look for bath products that contain lavender, proven to help you drift off, and sweet scents like tonka bean and almond oil.

Lie back and breathe in the fragrant fumes before bed to ensure a restful night's sleep.

A warm soak can also relax your muscles in time for your Valentine's treat.

Persistent aches and pains can feel so much worse when it's cold out, but a warm bath can make all the difference.

Boost the healing powers of hot water with bath salts that contain arnica, a natural muscle and joint reliever, or massage your sore spots for a few minutes with oil, then hop into the bath

to let the scent disperse. A warm bath can also relieve stress.

Feeling frazzled – then reach for a luxurious oil packed with essential oils that will calm even the most stressed-out mind. A blend of floral and citrus notes will evoke sunnier days and brighten your mood.

Of course not everyone wants a bath that will send them to sleep.



Oswestry and Welshpool businesses have plenty of gift ideas for Valentine's Day

Many want an energising aroma to wake them up ahead of the Valentine's Day celebrations.

Oils infused with zingy citrus and fresh floral scents will set you up for the day.

Whatever you have planned for Valentine's Day, just remember businesses in the Oswestry and Welshpool area have plenty on offer to ensure the time spent with your loved one will be perfect.

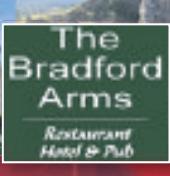
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Support for milk in meal deal plans

A SHROPSHIRE MP and senior official at the National Farmers' Union have backed calls to ask supermarkets to make milk part of their 'meal deal' offers.

North Shropshire MP Owen Paterson and Jonathan Evans, NFU county adviser, believe the move will help support the county's dairy farmers.

It comes after Backbench Tory MP Scott Mann made the request during a recent Prime Minister's Questions in the House of Commons, telling Theresa May that milk was "very important" to help children grow and as part of a healthy diet. North Shropshire MP Owen Paterson said: "I welcome the campaign to encourage supermarkets to include milk in 'meal deal' selections and for milk to be promoted in schools. A glass of milk is low in fat and gives us 31 per cent of our recommended daily calcium, 14 per cent of our daily calcium and 74 per cent of our daily vitamin b12; it would be a great way to support local dairy farmers and give consumers the opportunity to make healthier choices."

Jonathan Evans, NFU county adviser, said: "British farming is the bedrock of the nation's food and drink industry – the largest manufacturing sector in the UK – worth more than £108 billion and providing jobs for 3.9 million people. Dairy products are part of that success story and milk is a great product, it's a nutritional powerhouse – fresh, local and it can't be beaten for quality and taste and Shropshire farmers know how much work goes in to producing a litre."

Patient Ben in donation of crutches

A YOUNG patient who recently had his leg amputated has donated three sets of shock absorption crutches to the hospital that treated him.

Ben Rawson returned to Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital's Montgomery Unit to present staff with the Flexyfoot crutches.

The 21-year-old was diagnosed with a rare form of bone cancer called Ewing's Sarcoma. His diagnosis came back in June after finding a lump behind his knee.

Ben, from St Asaph in Denbighshire, said: "After a while of using the standard crutches that were provided, I started to find them painful to use, and I'd not long before that attended a sarcoma event where I spotted someone with a set of quite fancy crutches, which are the ones I have now."

"I find these have more grip, are more comfortable to use and the anatomical handles spread the weight more evenly."

"I won't be the only person who struggles with the standard crutches, which is why I wanted to donate some to the hospital in the hope it makes things easier for someone else going through what I have."

Youngsters to learn new moves

HUNDREDS of schoolchildren, including pupils at Gobowen Primary School near Oswestry, are set to learn new music and dance skills in an education project being delivered by one of the country's leading folk festivals.

Professional dancers will deliver workshops at four Shropshire schools – Chirbury Primary School, Gobowen Primary and St George's Junior and Radbrook Primary in Shrewsbury – until March as part of Shrewsbury Folk Festival's Room for All project, which aims to promote cultural diversity and introduce a new audience to different music and dance traditions.

Children will create performances blending Kathak, an expressive form of Indian movement, with contemporary dance and two free Continuing Professional Development sessions will be run for teachers.

There's plenty of kind help at orthopaedic hospital



Helen Stewart, a relative of a patient, Liz Reece, outpatients team manager and Victoria Sugden, charity director of the League of Friends, try out the new chairs



Louise Buxton with the cake Mandy Bride raffled off to help raise money

STAFF and fundraisers have been showing recently there's plenty of kindness at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital.

Work to improve the overall environment in the outpatients department for patients continues as new chairs for the waiting area have been kindly purchased by the hospital's League of Friends.

Almost 150 chairs were purchased – some of which are bespoke of varying heights to meet

the needs of patients who have had hip surgery. The new chairs form part of a wider project to revamp the outpatients department in order to improve the overall patient experience.

Meanwhile a staff nurse has thanked colleagues for their remarkable support after her home was ravaged by fire while she worked a night shift.

Louise Buxton, who works on Ludlow Ward, received the devastating news on December 21

when her partner returned home at around midnight.

The fire caused extensive damage to their home near Chirk. Sadly, her beloved dog Jasper also passed away from the effects of smoke inhalation.

Louise, 38, is a well-loved member of staff and does so much for others, including running the Virgin London Marathon last year for the hospital's own charity.

Emma Morgan, healthcare assistant on Ludlow Ward, along with Louise's other colleagues, set up a GoFundMe page for people to make donations.

Over £3,000 was raised for Louise and her partner. Mandy Bride, matron for medicine, rehabilitation and diagnostics, also bought a cake from Katie's Little Cake Company to raffle off to collect more money for Louise. This raised a further £160.

Society draws up a busy year of artistic activities



David Duncan gets creative during a society art session



Julia Benning draws an otter during an art session organised by the Oswestry and District Society of Artists

Report by Sue Austin

AS television takes painting and art to a new audience, the joy of putting brush to canvas is having a revival.

One art society says it has something for everyone in its 2018 programme – from pastels to acrylics, drawing techniques to collage.

BBC One's The Big Painting saw Una Stubbs and Richard Bacon lead a nationwide search for Britain's best amateur artist while Sky TV is about to begin its 2018 portrait competition.

The Oswestry and District Society of Artists has organised a number of workshops in which experts will pass on their knowledge to members.

They include a collage workshop by Penny Price, drawing techniques with Malcolm Hague, line and wash by Ian Fennerley, watercolours lead by Judith Farnworth, a day of pastels with Dennis Oaks, an acrylic workshop led by Lesley Fisher and a watercolour day with Rosie Davies.

There will be two main exhibitions of work by society members – one at Chirk Castle at the end of May, the second at Oswestry's Memorial Hall in July.

Anthony Smith, curator of the Willow Gallery in Oswestry, will provide a critique of member's work in September and other events will include a trip to an exhibition and the annual dinner.

The programme began with a paint together session in the Wilfred Owen Suite at the Memorial Hall, Oswestry.

New members are welcome to join the group, with details from Ann Wilkie on (01691) 718535.



Lesley Fisher paints an image of Cornwall



Angela Turner, Ken Salisbury and Colleen Sayers discuss art together

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More nurses are leaving the NHS in the county than joining it, new figures reveal

MORE nurses left the health service in Shropshire last year than joined, new NHS figures have revealed.

The figures from NHS Digital show that 120 nurses walked away from jobs in the county, while only 103 joined.

In England, more than 33,000 nurses left their jobs last year – with the number of leavers surpassing the number of those joining the workforce by 3,000.

The Royal College of Nursing is urging ministers to act.

Shropshire's hospitals are training associate nurses to fill the gaps, but Mike Adams, West Midlands director at the RCN, said the figures were "worrying".

He said: "I think nurses are now working

Report by Lisa O'Brien

under extreme pressure. It's a very complicated, highly-skilled job and the conditions of work are becoming increasingly tough for nurses.

"It's unprecedented levels of pressure and strain now and it becomes very hard and demoralising very quickly if you can't deliver the standard of care that you feel you should be able to deliver."

Speaking about the number of nurses leaving the profession, he said: "It is really worrying and the warning signs have been there for a while.

"Organisations like the RCN have been flag-

ging this for quite a long time. If you don't invest in nurses, if you don't value nurses, then it's not going to be an attractive job and people aren't going to stay in that job."

He said nursing students no longer receive bursaries and instead have to take out student loans, which may discourage some people from joining the profession.

Future

Mr Adams said the government now needed to focus on how the NHS will be funded in the future.

He said: "We need to accept that demand is going to increase as our population ages and increases. It's not just hospitals. We have to invest in our community services, in our health

visitors, in our district nurses, in our GP services, in our general practice nurses, to make sure that the whole system is set up to look after people in the best place for them, so we avoid people needing to come to hospital as a last resort all the time."

Professor Jane Cummings, England's chief nursing officer based at NHS England, said: "We do lose people that need to be encouraged."

"We're in the process of bringing in lots of nurse ambassadors that are going to be able to talk about what a great role it is, to be able to tell their story, so we can really encourage people to enter the profession and for those in the profession, to stay in it."

She said the NHS was trying to make nursing more attractive.

Waste company is banned from tipping at landfill site

Report by Jonny Drury

A FIRM has been banned from tipping waste at a landfill site because of the risk of pollution it is posing.

Officers from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have suspended the permit of Potters Waste Management, of Welshpool, to tip waste at Bryn Posteg landfill site in Llanidloes.

However, bosses at the waste firm said the site continues to be open to its customers for waste reception and waste received will then be transported off site for disposal at one of its alternative disposal points.

The permit was suspended after evidence showed the site now holds substantially more waste than it is legally allowed to do.

NRW also estimates that the site is significantly higher in places than permitted. Both issues put Potters in breach of its environmental permit, bosses at NRW said. As a result, Potters, one of Wales's largest waste operators, is not allowed to tip any more waste at the landfill.

Measures

Last year NRW applied other legal measures, such as serving legal notices on the operator, in an attempt to make the site compliant with its permit conditions. David Powell, operations manager for Natural Resources Wales, said: "We try to work with operators of landfill sites wherever we can to make sure they protect the environment by complying with the conditions in their permit. We now have evidence that Bryn Posteg landfill site contains significantly more waste than it is permitted to do so. The decision to stop waste being disposed of in the landfill is a last resort, but there is a risk to the surrounding environment as a result of over-tipping."

In response, James Potter, director at Potters, said: "All notices and deadlines issued to the site by Natural Resources Wales have been complied with. The company continues to spend significant sums of money, in the region of £2 million, to address such issues and we always strive to continually improve our operations. The company always works with the regulator to ensure that the site is compliant with its permit conditions and this will continue. The site continues to be open to our customers for waste reception within the MRF. Waste received will then be transported off site for disposal at one of our alternative disposal points."

BUSINESSES and residents are being urged to have their say on plans for a new electricity line running across North Shropshire.

Power company SP Energy Networks says there is still time to comment on the proposals for an £18 million reinforcement project to develop a new wooden pole overhead line between Oswestry and Wem.

It says the new line will secure and strengthen the power supply in the area.

The consultation is due to close on Friday next week.

Overhead shots map area's natural heritage



One of the images taken from a drone as part of a project to map North Shropshire's countryside heritage. Photo: Drone Rangers, Ludlow.

THEY are stunning aerial shots of a beauty spot near Oswestry.

But the overhead images of Ellesmere's Mere will also be playing an important role in caring for the habitat of the area in the future. Shropshire Council has published a series of stunning photographs taken from a drone as part of a project to map the countryside heritage sites in the north of the county that are managed by the council.

Shaun Burkey, Shropshire Council's country parks and sites officer for North Shropshire, said: "We are working with Drone Rangers of Ludlow on the long-term aerial mapping of our countryside heritage sites in North Shropshire.

"These high definition aerial maps enable us to take habitat management to a new level of detail and offer a new perspective, particularly in difficult to reach locations and terrains.

"The intention is to periodically repeat the

mapping process every few years over the long-term in order to analyse vegetation and site management, thereby producing a long term dataset."

He said that as well as the countryside management the photographs were also helping tourism. He said: "Video footage and stills are also being taken for promotional purposes, revealing some sites for the first time from the air, including The Mere."

There's still a chance to have say on power plans

During December the company held five public information days across North Shropshire, where residents, landowners, members of the public and stakeholders were able to meet the project team to examine and discuss the plans.

The proposals are still available and interested parties can make comments by visiting the libraries in Wem, Oswestry, Ellesmere and Whitchurch, with copies also available at Shropshire Council's planning department at Shrewsbury and Oswestry town councils. Additionally, the consultation documents can be

accessed with online feedback forms available at www.spenergynetworks.co.uk.

Mark Sobczak, 132kV general manager at SP Energy Networks, said: "The consultation events were well attended."

"The comments from the events will be taken in to account, and there is still time for anyone with an interest in the project to provide feedback."

"Since 2016, we have received hundreds of comments on the proposals and we have carried out a wide variety of studies."

"All of this information will shape our plans and we want as many views as possible to be included."

The project will see a new wood pole electricity line run from Oswestry substation, located at the A5/A495 roundabout, to Wem substation, located on Ellesmere Road on the western side of Wem. This line will provide capacity to support development on land allocated for new jobs and homes in Oswestry, Whitchurch and Wem. It will attract future business and housing investment across North Shropshire.

Health bar agrees Walsall meal deal

SINCE opening just a few months ago it has served healthy food to people in and around a market town, but now a health bar is branching out to provide food to the region's footballers.

Heat Health Bar, owned by Tom Brown who also runs The Meat Man in Oswestry, opened in August.

In late 2017 the bar, which employs a handful of staff, struck a partnership with Shrewsbury Town to supply their post match meals for away trips in League One.

And the reputation of the Heat bar is growing, with a new partnership with fellow League One club Walsall now being struck up.

The staff at the bar will prepare meals for the club and chef Harry Davies admitted it was great to be recognised by professional football clubs from further afield.

He said: "It is great to have Walsall on board with the Heat Bar, it shows we are moving in the right direction and have taken little time to build a great reputation not just in Oswestry but further afield.

"It is going to create more work, but it is great for the business and will certainly keep us busy."

"We will be supplying prep meals for their away games, similar to what we do with Shrewsbury town."



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Amuse Bouche

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or

Panko mozzarella, dressed rocket, pine-nut and sun-dried tomato salsa (V)

Palette Cleanser

Rioja and pink grapefruit granita (V,G,D)

Main Courses

Breast of Gressingham Duck (Cooked Pink)

with a compote of English rhubarb, glazed baby vegetables, dauphine potatoes,
crispy plum and leg croquette, sweet wine sauce
or

Duo of Beef

Fillet of welsh beef, oxtail and marmite ragout, shallot purée, bone marrow crumb,
scorched foie gras and a Madeira sauce

Assiette of Vegetables (V,G)

Baked Portobello mushroom, heritage tomato stack, courgette stuffed with feta and red pepper,
duo of pepper coulis, toasted pine nut and basil crumb, parmesan crisp

Dessert

A lover's mosaic of chocolate and strawberries to share

To Finish

Tea or coffee and homemade petit fours

Some items on our menu may contain nuts, seeds or other allergens.
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CHURCH STREET, OSWESTRY, SHROPSHIRE, SY11 2SZ

A FORMER children's home boss has been cleared of historic sex abuse on a young boy at an orphanage.

Michael John Carroll – who has been jailed for similar offences at the same care home – had been due to stand trial in April in Liverpool.

But the prosecution has now decided not to pursue the allegations against him and a judge at the city's crown court has formally entered not guilty verdicts on the three charges he faced. Carroll, 69, known as John, had denied two offences of indecent assault and one of gross indecency involving the child between April 1975 and 1977 when the boy was aged between six and eight.

Carroll, who lives in Weston Rhyn, Oswestry, was not present for the brief hearing as he was away on holiday.

It had been alleged the offences occurred at St Edmund's Orphanage in Bebington, Wirral, where he himself had been in care before taking up a job at the institution in the mid-1960s.

Twelve years later he took up a post as deputy officer in charge of a children's home in Lambeth before taking overall charge in 1980. He was eventually dismissed following financial irregularities. He was jailed for 10 years in 1999 after admitting 35 offences against 12 boys.

Care home boss admits £3,850 fraud

A WOMAN who ran a home for the elderly near Oswestry has admitted taking almost £4,000 from a resident's bank account.

Cherie Reynolds, 49, withdrew cash and used the victim's bank card to pay for equipment for the Ashgrove Residential Home in St Martins.

Reynolds admitted 12 charges of fraud committed between July 2015 and October 2016.

A total of £3,850 was taken from the account of a man while he was a resident at the home in Church Lane and she was responsible for safeguarding his financial interests.

Reynolds admitted making eight cash withdrawals of between £100 and £300 and spending around £2,350 on items for the residential home.

There were three payments of £1,239, £350 and £460 for bedroom and lounge furniture and £298 for garden furniture, including several garden gnomes, a court heard.

Sentence at Shrewsbury Crown Court was adjourned for reports to a date to be fixed and Reynolds, of Church Lane, St Martins, was allowed bail.

An application for a confiscation order under the Proceeds of Crime Act has been adjourned until April.

Retired farmer died after fall

A RETIRED farmer who suffered from Alzheimer's disease died after accidentally falling down stairs at his home, an inquest heard.

Delwyn Jones, 83, sustained a brain injury as a result of the fall in Llanwddyn, near Oswestry, on January 8. He died the following morning in hospital.

Coroner's officer for Shrewsbury Paul Williams told the hearing Mr Jones's wife Gwenfron, a former nurse, had explained that due to the condition her husband would sleep in the day time and be awake wandering round the house at night.

Mr Williams, speaking at the inquest held in Telford, said: "At about 11.30pm, Mrs Jones was in bed when she heard a loud bang."

"Her son went to investigate and found Mr Jones had fallen down the stairs and was lying on the floor."

"An ambulance was called and Mr Jones was taken to the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital. He was treated by an accident and emergency doctor but sadly his condition deteriorated and he died at about 7am."

He said that an investigation by officers from Dyfed Powys Police found no suspicious circumstances. The cause of death was given as brain injury, respiratory arrest, a fall and Alzheimer's.

In the morning, parents will be welcomed

to the associate headteacher and will receive a talk from the head of sixth form about the curriculum on offer, academic and pastoral care approaches and post 16 reform whilst students take part in taster lessons by subject specialist teachers.

Claire Boyes, head of sixth form at The Marches School, said: "We are delighted to be able to offer the opportunity for prospective students to see what it is like to study at The Marches Sixth Form."

Students applying to the sixth form from September can choose from the 24 A Levels and 6 BTEC level 3 courses on offer.

"Our extensive course offer in 2018 has en-

Report by Keri Trigg

MOTORISTS will have to pay more to park in some areas of the county and less in others after members of Shropshire Council approved a new parking policy.

The council's cabinet met last week to vote on a report which recommended new "linear" fees for car parks and on-street permits.

The new policy will see charges change for the first time since 2012 and will unify parking across Shropshire with all car parks and on-street parking provision sorted into seven bands.

Councillor Steve Davenport, portfolio holder for highways, presented the report to cabinet, saying it was the product of the council's "largest consultation in many years".

He said officers had listened to them con-

cerns and made changes to the plans to reflect the consultation responses.

"This is to provide good-quality parking in the county. The money raised from these car parks will go back into car parks or highways in general," he said.

The linear approach means drivers will pay the same for each hour of parking, but this will be capped at eight hours for car parks in bands four, five and six.

Band three, four, five and six will have hourly rates of £1, 70p, 50p and 30p respectively, while band seven zones are free.

Much Wenlock Councillor David Turner

spoke against the report, saying it was "Shrewsbury-centric" and "should not be at the expense of the smaller towns".

He added: "It shows little understanding of the towns in rural areas. What might be right in Market Drayton or Whitchurch is not right for Much Wenlock."

The new strategy follows a 12-week public consultation which ran between July and October last year.

Almost 2,500 people made their views known and as a result 22 new and revised proposals were included in the report.

Approval of the scheme also means the hours motorists have to pay for parking will be extended to 8pm from the current 6pm cut-off in band one and two areas, despite fears raised

during the consultation that this would put people off attending community group meetings and could harm the night-time economies of the county's major towns.

The cost of installing new signs and equipment to reflect the changes is estimated to reach £917,000 by the end of the 2018/19 financial year.

The changes will affect Shropshire Council run car parks in Oswestry.

However, they will not affect the fees charged at car parks owned by Oswestry Town Council.

The town council agreed last week to freeze the charges at its car parks.

Oswestry Town Council owns Central Car Park, the town's main car park, as well as the Horsemarket and Smithfield Street car parks.

Extra mortuary space is added at area's hospitals

Report by Sue Austin

EXTRA mortuary space is being made available after a combination of winter deaths and restricted operating times for Shropshire's crematoria put pressure on the county's hospitals.

A meeting of senior Shropshire Council staff, funeral directors and Dignity, the operator of Emstrey Crematorium in Shrewsbury, is being held to look at ways of helping Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS trust (Sath), which manages both Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and Princess Royal Hospital in Telford.

A major breakdown at Emstrey and repairs at the Telford crematorium have meant that Dignity is having to restrict the number of services that take place in Shropshire.

The firm said slots are still available and it is also offering Saturday cremations at no extra cost to prevent a backlog.

Funeral directors have said they have had to organise cremations out of the county, including in Wrexham and Wolverhampton.

Glyn Davies, MP for Montgomeryshire, an area that looks to Emstrey for its cremations, said he had been told of services that have been moved to Aberystwyth.

Edwin Borman, medical director at Sath, said: "The trust has arranged for additional mortuary space capacity for Telford, that is already in place. For Shrewsbury, that will be arriving shortly." Professor Rod Thomson, director of public health for Shropshire Council, said: "At this time of the year it is not unusual for hospital mortuaries to have a greater demand on their facilities. With the slightly higher number of deaths due to influenza, and the impact on funeral services due to the reduced opening hours over the festive season, pressure on mortuary capacity and funeral director services are also higher."

"Whilst the current facilities at Emstrey are being upgraded, Dignity the operator of the crematorium has extended its services to include Saturdays. We continue to monitor the situation and we are working closely with Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Services to help it and local funeral services manage this demand."

Dignity took over the crematoria at Emstrey and Telford in 2016 and said the equipment it inherited was not up to its standards and had now suffered a serious breakdown.

Mr Williams, speaking at the inquest held in Telford, said: "At about 11.30pm, Mrs Jones was in bed when she heard a loud bang."

"Her son went to investigate and found Mr Jones had fallen down the stairs and was lying on the floor."

"An ambulance was called and Mr Jones was taken to the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital. He was treated by an accident and emergency doctor but sadly his condition deteriorated and he died at about 7am."

He said that an investigation by officers from Dyfed Powys Police found no suspicious circumstances. The cause of death was given as brain injury, respiratory arrest, a fall and Alzheimer's.

In the morning, parents will be welcomed

Wind and snow cause traffic disruption



A stricken car lies on its roof on the B5069 leading out of Oswestry on a weekend in which minor roads were made treacherous by snow

STRONG winds and then snowfall caused travel disruption in the Oswestry and Welshpool areas.

Uprooted trees and blocked roads caused by the winds on Thursday caused delays for motorists and commuters.

A number of roads were closed and trains delayed as fallen trees and debris caused travel problems across Shropshire and Mid Wales.

Among the roads closed by fallen debris was the B4579 Oswestry to Selattyn road.

Train operator Arriva Trains Wales suspended services between Newtown and Welshpool after a freight train smashed into two

sheds, which had been blown on to the track resulting in replacement coach services running between Shrewsbury and Machynlleth instead.

Meanwhile services from Wrexham to Shrewsbury were being diverted or cancelled after the track was obstructed by debris.

The Environment Agency also put flood alerts in place for the River Severn as modest amounts of rain pushed up water levels.

Drivers were also warned that the Pentre to Melverley road near Royal Hill could be affected by flooding. A snowfall over the weekend saw more tricky driving conditions. Heavy

snow turned to rain, bringing treacherous conditions to many roads and causing several accidents. One on the B5069 leading out of Oswestry led to a 4x4 car overturning on to its roof, blocking the road on Sunday.

Meanwhile in an unrelated accident but on the same road, a car flipped onto its roof in an early hours crash on Thursday. Emergency services crews were called at around 12.40am.

Jamie Arrowsmith, from West Midlands Ambulance Service said: "There was one patient who had managed to get themselves out of the vehicle. They were uninjured and discharged at the scene."

Chance to enjoy a taste of life as a sixth form student

THE Marches Sixth Form in Oswestry will be opening its doors on February 3 to prospective students offering them the opportunity to experience life as a sixth form student.

Since the sixth form opened at The Marches School in 2013 it has gone from strength to strength and now accommodates just over 150 students in a modern, purpose-built centre.

Students applying to the sixth form from September can choose from the 24 A Levels and 6 BTEC level 3 courses on offer.

In the morning, parents will be welcomed

by the associate headteacher and will receive a talk from the head of sixth form about the curriculum on offer, academic and pastoral care approaches and post 16 reform whilst students take part in taster lessons by subject specialist teachers.

Claire Boyes, head of sixth form at The Marches School, said: "We are delighted to be able to offer the opportunity for prospective students to see what it is like to study at The Marches Sixth Form."

Students applying to the sixth form from September can choose from the 24 A Levels and 6 BTEC level 3 courses on offer.

"Our extensive course offer in 2018 has en-

abled us to increase opportunities for a wider range of students.

"Young people who apply to the Marches Sixth Form will be able to blend a pathway that suits them and their individual career aspirations. All applicants to the sixth form have a personal one-to-one interview and are given expert careers advice to ensure they choose the right courses for them."

"Excellent transport links, including private minibuses operated by the school, mean that students travel from surrounding areas includ-

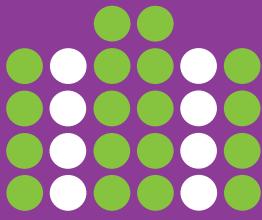
ing Wrexham, Chirk, Ellesmere and Powys to attend the sixth form.

"We are very proud to have recruited exceedingly bright students from such a wide range of secondary schools in England and Wales."

"Our offering of BTEC courses means that the sixth form is also accessible to an even wider range of students from Oswestry and beyond."

"I am excited to be able to share this information with prospective students and their families at our forthcoming taster morning."

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Artistic reminder of highly successful balloon festival



Steve Parry, left, from Nightingale House and Clive Knowles from the British Ironwork Centre

A REMINDER of a weekend of ballooning fundraising near Oswestry has been presented to a hospice.

The six-foot-long wall artwork of hot air balloons taking to the skies was commissioned by The British Ironwork Centre which hosted the balloon festival in August.

The event raised funds for the Wrexham-based Nightingale House Hospice which has many patients and families from Shropshire.

Clive Knowles, chairman of the British Ironwork Centre, said the piece had been produced for Nightingale House's newly refurbished reception area.

"The inspiration for this piece was Oswestry's first hot air balloon festival which raised an incredible £25,000 for the charity over the three-day event," he said.

Mr Knowles said: "It was thorough pleasure to support Nightingale House Hospice.

It is a hugely valuable asset and vital service to the area.

"The work and support the hospice provides is incredible."

Steve Parry, chief executive of Nightingale House Hospice, said it would take pride of place in the hospice's newly refurbished reception.

He said: "We are delighted to receive this magnificent iron balloon festival portrait.

"The portrait will be prominently displayed

within the hospice. It provides a permanent reminder of the balloon festival which was a great success whilst also raising in excess of £25,000 for the hospice. The hospice provides adult specialist palliative care service for patients and support for families covering North Wales and the North Shropshire border.

"We are extremely grateful to the British Ironwork Centre for their continued support of Nightingale House Hospice."



Families enjoyed great fun at the balloon festival in the summer

NEWS IN BRIEF

Firefighters rescue horse from ditch

AN elderly horse was rescued from a one-foot deep muddy ditch by firefighters.

It took the strength of more than 15 firefighters from Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's highly trained animal rescue team based in Wellington to pull the animal out of the ditch near Oswestry in a 90-minute rescue operation.

The horse, called Chance, had slipped on a muddy bank on the edge of a field at Sarn Farm at St Martins at around 5.30pm on Thursday last week and toppled onto his back into a ditch.

Tangled in wire fencing and hedgerow, the distressed horse was unable to get back onto his feet when he was found by the owner's daughter Rosie Mackay, 26, and partner Louis Davies, who had been searching for the pet horse by torchlight.

Mother-of-two Rosie, of Castle Street, Oswestry, who dialled 999 while Louis used wire cutters to free the animal from the fencing, said: "The back legs were trapped in pig wire and he was upside down, three foot or four foot down the back when we found him.

"It was pitch black. We were panicking and the horse was shaking.

"I thought he was going to die."

Oswestry and Ellesmere firefighters arrived at the scene and immediately called out the specialist crew from Wellington fire station - who are trained in large and difficult animal rescues. They cut away undergrowth and wire fencing and put up floodlights ready for the rescue team.

The 26-year-old grey Arabian Arab is now recovering well after his ordeal.

Teenagers are arrested over drugs supply

ELEVEN teenagers have been arrested for supplying drugs or possession with intent to supply drugs in Shropshire in a 12-month period.

Between October 1, 2016 and September 30, 2017 seven teenagers were arrested for possession with intent to supply controlled drug of Class A, one teenager was 15 years old, one was 16 and five were 17.

The information comes from a Freedom of Information request to West Mercia Police. In the same time period, four teenagers were arrested for possession with intent to supply cannabis, one 15-year-old and three who were 16.

Two teenagers have been charged for supplying or possession with intent to supply controlled substances.

A 17-year-old was charged for supplying or possession of heroin.

Detective Chief Inspector Graham Precees from West Mercia Police said: "We have put in a number of initiatives to educate children and young people about the dangers of drugs and the harm they can have on our communities, working with partners to ensure they have the support to make the right choices."

Prep school in special honour

A SCHOOL has become a member of the Independent Association of Prep Schools.

Oswestry School has been granted the honour for its prep site, Bellan House.

Claire Belk, head of Bellan House, said to become a member of the organisation, schools must reach a very high standard, with strict criteria on teaching a broad curriculum, maintaining excellent standards of pastoral care, and keeping staff members' professional development training up to date.

"Each school must also be committed to delivering an excellent, well-rounded education to the pupils in their care," she said. "The association believes that schools should be unfettered by government interference and with fewer financial and other resourcing constraints than state schools, and ensure that their members' educational provision is tailored to the needs of the individual children."

Exhibition shows the huge effort to restore waterway



Library assistant Karen Leggett with the exhibition



Work to restore the canal is a labour of love



The restoration of the canal has been a messy job at times



The hard work of the restoration is seen in the exhibition



The restoration of the canal has required major work to be undertaken



Volunteers hope the canal will be fully restored in the future

Report by Sue Austin

IT has been a labour of love for almost half a century, volunteers spending countless hours working to restore a disused canal.

Narrowboats now run on much of the Montgomery Canal, thanks to the hard work of generations of volunteers and work is ongoing to complete the restoration of the 35-mile waterway between Newtown in Mid Wales and the junction with the Llangollen Canal near Oswestry.

A fascinating insight into the enormous task that has been undertaken is the subject of an exhibition that is currently on display at Oswestry Library.

The photographic exhibition organised by the Canal and River Trust charity will remain in the library in Arthur Street until Saturday. A touring exhibition, it has been funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund as part of the Montgomery Canal restoration project.

It attracted hundreds of viewers when it was displayed in Welshpool and Newtown, the two other towns on the canal.

Sylvia Edwards, Montgomery Canal community development officer, said the exhibition brought together a unique record of the canal from 1969 to 2017, as seen through the eyes of several generations of waterway-lovers.

She said: "This exhibition combines photographs from workshops, archives, events and from the current restoration of the canal being carried out by the Shropshire Union Canal Society volunteers. For many people, it will be a trip down memory lane."

TRADE waste and recycling currently collected by a charity will soon be carried out by Powys County Council.

Powys County Council's trade waste and recycling team will start collecting from existing customers of Cae Post after the group announced it was to stop its trade waste and recycling collections at the end of the month with the loss of 10 jobs.

The council is working closely with Cae Post, which is based near Welshpool, to ensure that trade waste and recycling customers continue to receive a service.

Cae Post is an environmental charity and social enterprise. It has contacted customers to inform them that the council will start collecting their trade waste and recycling from the beginning of February.

Councillor Phil Davies said: "I would like to reassure businesses that currently use Cae Post that they will continue to receive a trade waste and recycling service. We will work with Cae Post over the coming weeks to ensure that the transfer of services to the council is as seamless as possible. We will be contacting Cae Post's existing customers to inform them of the new arrangements. We will make sure that those customers impacted by the changes receive a prompt and professional trade waste and recycling collection service from Powys County Council."

Council gets an improved settlement

A LOCAL authority has welcomed news that it will receive a smaller cut in its budget than first thought.

Powys County Council was set to receive a budget settlement cut from the Welsh Government of around 1.4 per cent, which equates to £1.7 million.

The authority has received the lowest settlement in the country for many years, however secretary for local government and public services, Alun Davies, has confirmed that its reduction would only be £700,000.

A spokesperson for the council said: "The confirmed budget is a slight improvement for the county and will see Powys receive more than £1m in revenue funding than it was anticipating."

"The increase does not mean we will have an easy time setting the budget and the level of council tax in the coming months, but it is a positive move and we are grateful to the Welsh Government for the recognition that providing services in a large rural county is expensive."

"The cabinet has been working on the funding priorities for some time and the government's confirmed budget position will make that task a little easier."

"But, there is no doubt we still face significant challenges in the future."

Homes in line to be built by school

A MAJOR new housing development could be built close to a new primary school in Welshpool.

The multi-million pound project has been earmarked for Gallowtree Bank near The Flash leisure centre.

The land has already been pre-approved for development.

The pre-approval is given through the latest Welshpool Town and Community Plan, so there isn't expected to be objections to the application.

The town council said that the land is in the development boundary, so that won't pose an issue.

However, the plan is in the early stages and will go out to consultation later this year.

One concern the planners have got is with the amount of additional traffic that will be caused by the development, which will run alongside the current housing on Gallowtree Bank. Other concerns include how the houses would look with the surroundings, and the provision of amenity space and the council is going to insist on more amenity space and a playground.

The construction will be close to the new primary school which is being built on the Salop Road sports fields and JS Developments will be responsible for the project.

Science teacher joins growing number of people keen to support the church ministry

Report by Jonny Drury

A TEACHER in Oswestry has joined a growing number of people seeking forms of ministry with the Church in Wales.

Figures from the Diocese of St Asaph over the last five years have shown a 10-fold increase in the number of people starting ordination training.

In 2012 there were no candidates, but since then the numbers have grown steadily and in September, 10 people started courses to become a priest.

Among those is James Tout, from Penley near Wrexham, who is the director of science at the Marches School in Oswestry.

Mr Tout is training part time to become an unpaid priest and is on a placement with the Offa Mission Area of churches, based around

Ruabon, Chirk and Rhosymedre. He said: "I have been exploring a call to ordained ministry since I was around 19 years old. It's hard to describe, and is different for everyone but for me it's like a constant tapping in my mind, every time I think 'no it can't be me' there is a constant unmistakable tapping that seems to drum to the beat of 'yep, it's you'."

"I tried to calm the tapping by taking on more responsibility in the churches I have worshipped in, nevertheless none of these worked.

"The best piece of advice I have for anyone is pray, the answer may be scary, challenging, frightening even; but be bold and trust in God."

Mr Tout is continuing to work full time as a teacher and fits his priest training around his job.

He added: "I've started this training because I can fit it around my full time job as director of science at the Marches School in Oswestry.

"I attend eight weekly meetings in each of the three terms in the year and two Saturday sessions. With a full time job and a young family the training is suitable and manageable."

A host of other people across North Wales have been following a similar path to Mr Tout.

Gregor Lachlann-Waddell, from Ruthin used to work part time as a bimman in training, and Wendy Shillito from Mold has taken early retirement as a GP to train a licensed reader.

The director of ministry at the Diocese of St

Asaph, Canon Dr Manon Ceridwen James, said the increase in numbers show how people are committed to their faith.

Dr James added: "I'm delighted with the rise in number of candidates starting their ordination training.

"This reflects an increased commitment from people to their faith with better opportunities to study in flexible ways.

"The Diocese of St Asaph has invested heavily in training for both its paid clergy and unpaid lay members or volunteers and this is encouraging people to take theology seriously and explore all sorts of forms of ministry.

"We've got people from all backgrounds following their vocation or calling to become a priest or follow other ministries."

Broadband law is a 'game changer' says top councillor

Report by Sue Austin

NEW legislation giving people the legal right to high-speed broadband by 2020 will be a "game changer" for countryside businesses and households, a leading councillor says.

Shropshire Council's deputy leader Steve Charmley says the announcement by the government was great news for rural communities.

He said broadband providers had avoided the hardest to reach areas for too long.

In its announcement, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport dismissed a call from network provider BT that offering broadband speeds of at least 10 Mbps should be a voluntary rather than legal obligation.

Instead it said only a universal service obligation would offer certainty that those broadband speeds would reach the whole of the UK by 2020.

Pockets

Large pockets of rural Shropshire are still without high-speed broadband with some areas unable to get Wi-fi at all.

Culture secretary Karen Bradley said: "We know how important broadband is to homes and businesses and we want everyone to benefit from a fast and reliable connection."

Councillor Charmley said that rural areas needed broadband as much as anywhere else.

He said: "It is fantastic news that government is finally giving rural communities the right to superfast broadband. BT have avoided the hardest to reach areas for too long.

"We have rural businesses including our BandBs, pubs, tourist attractions, who need broadband to run their organisations and to market themselves.

"Farms have to have broadband now to pay their taxes. And families should not be penalised simply because they live in the countryside.

"This will now put the onus on providers to ensure people can have high-speed broadband if they request it. It is such an important shift in how broadband is being rolled out, it really is a game changer for Shropshire."

He said the council would now be looking for updated talks with BT over the future of the roll-out of the service in Shropshire.

Parts of Shropshire are among the one million 'forgotten homes' that communications regulator, Ofcom, said were unable to get sufficiently fast broadband to meet a typical family's needs.

Kapow! Hospice wants to hear from heroes



Charlotte Riley, left, Dil Powell and Jo Moxam get ready for the 5k inflatable obstacle course race for Severn Hospice funds

HEAD to your nearest phone box, it's time to turn into a charity superhero.

Severn Hospice has fired up its bat signal and is calling all caped crusaders, wonder women, supermen and super Teds to the West Mid Showground for Shropshire's biggest inflatable obstacle course

Kapow! guarantees to be a day of pneumatic nonsense on April 21 as hundreds of supporters don their best masks, tights and comedy pants to raise funds for the charity.

Lucy Ruff, fundraising manager at Severn

Hospice, said: "This is such an exciting new event, we've been working on it for a few months and we are delighted to announce it to the world. Budding superheroes will have to battle their way through huge obstacles, lots of bubbles and giant slides over the 5km course.

"It's the first time the area's seen anything like this on this scale and it's going to be absolutely brilliant. All we're asking in return is for people to raise funds for us."

"You don't actually need super powers to take part, just a sense of super fun – and be

over the age of eight and at least 1.2 metres tall. We are encouraging people to dress as superheroes but if you'd rather keep your pants under your clothes and just wear sports gear, you're still welcome."

Registration for Kapow! costs £20 and includes full entry – plus a hospice hero's medal and a bottle of water. Lucy added: "We're also on the lookout for superhero sidekicks – volunteers to help on the day." For more information about the Kapow!, or to register online, visit www.severnospice.org.uk.

Filmmaker wins awards for documentary on autism

A BUDDING film maker has scooped a number of awards for a documentary regarding his brother's life with autism.

Tom Griffiths, 21, from Chirk near Oswestry, is a film student at Edge Hill University and since making the documentary called Autism: A Curious Case of the Human Mind, he has seen it played all over the world from Kiev to Florida.

He has won awards in America after the documentary won best feature prizes.

The film charts his brother Owen's life living

with autism and how other people cope with being on the spectrum, including those with autism, parents and friends.

It is the first film Tom has made, and he is hoping it is the first of many as he hopes to embark on a career in the industry.

He said: "It is something I had maybe been a little bit ignorant about, not understanding autism and people on the spectrum."

"It was interesting and insightful to hear from people who had been living with autism, and parents and other people."

"I thought I knew my brother Owen really well, but this documentary, which I started back in 2015, has made me discover more about him."

Owen was diagnosed with autism at the age of three, and when he was born doctors told his parents he would never speak.

But despite being non-verbal, he can now read and communicate at the age of 20.

Tom said it was interesting to meet others to see how they compared to his brother.

He said: "One woman in the documentary,

Brenda, had a son on the spectrum. I was sent some home videos of him to study his mannerisms and it was like putting a mirror against my brother." With his debut documentary now out there for all to see, Tom is hoping people will see it and financially back future ventures.

He added: "I am proud of the awards and stuff, but it is great to just get it out there. I have to raise all the funds for my own films, but now I have the documentary out there and I can show prospective backers what I have done."

PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY
GUIDE TO HOME
BUYING AND
LETTING

Immaculately presented home sits on edge of village

An immaculately presented three-bedroomed detached family home set on the edge of the popular village of Morda, Veronica on Trefonen Road has outstanding views to the rear over open countryside.

The property has been extended and tastefully renovated throughout to create an excellent living space yet still retains a host of original features. It is for sale through Bowen Son & Watson at £280,000. Its accommodation briefly comprises an entrance hall, a shower room/utility, kitchen/diner, a lounge, three bedrooms, a family bathroom, garage and gardens. The home is double glazed and has central heating throughout. The property also has a host of exposed oak beams, flooring and internal oak doors throughout. It is set in the popular village of Morda approximately one mile from Oswestry town centre.

In more detail the entrance hall has oak flooring, stairs off and a large under-stairs storage cupboard with coat hooks. The shower room/utility has a worktop with wall cupboards over with space and plumbing for a washing machine below and tiled floor. There is also a large shower cubicle with a power shower and tiled surround, low level flush WC, wall mounted wash hand basin, a heated towel rail and spotlights to the ceiling. The kitchen/dining room has oak units with oak worktops, a Belfast sink with a mixer tap, a range cooker with five gas rings, an electric warming plate, an electric double oven, (one conventional and one fan assisted), an electric grill and extractor hood above, oak flooring and oak ceiling beams. There is also a brick fireplace with a slate hearth housing a multi fuel stove and a door to the outside. The lounge has a brick fireplace with an oak mantle housing a multi fuel burner, oak beams and patio doors to a decked area. Stairs lead from the entrance hall to a split level landing. Bedroom one has ceiling beams, stripped floorboards and shutters to the window. Bedroom two has ceiling beams, large fitted double wardrobes with hanging rails and a shelf above. Bedroom three also has ceiling beams.

The bathroom has a three piece suite.

KEY FEATURES

- Detached family home
- Edge of village position
- Outstanding views
- Extended & renovated
- Three bedrooms

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Spacious detached house enjoys some stunning views

TREFONEN
£425,000

Kappara, Spring Bank, Trefonen near Oswestry is a spacious detached house with stunning views towards The Shropshire Plain.

Being a short distance of the village amenities, it is for sale through JJ Dell & Co at £425,000 with no chain. The property occupies a quiet elevated position in Trefonen which has a public house, church, shop, sought after primary school and is convenient for the border market town of Oswestry. The accommodation is set over four floors with four half staircases and has oil fired central heating and double glazing.

It has a covered porch similar to a large front veranda, a reception hall with stairs off, a lounge with a marble fireplace, patio doors and a fitted carpet. The sitting room has a brick fireplace, patio doors and a fitted carpet. Off the first floor is a galleried landing. A study has fitted office furniture and



laminate flooring. The dining room has fitted carpet and there is a cloakroom/WC. The kitchen has a range of modern oak units comprising of matching wall and base cupboards. The utility has a second sink, worktop, plumbing for a washing machine, matching wall and base cupboards, a fitted store cupboard and an oak stable external door. On the second floor is bedroom one with a dressing room and an en-suite and bedroom two. The third floor galleried landing has a large airing cupboard. The bathroom has a five piece suite including a whirlpool corner bath and a bidet. There are three further bedrooms on this floor.

Outside, the property is approached over a tarmacadam drive providing ample car parking leading to a detached double garage and a top floor store room/play room.

Contact JJ Dell & Co on 01691 653437.



Converted chapel situated in quiet lane in lovely village

LLANFECHAIN
£125,000 >>>

Swn Yr Afon in the picturesque village of Llanfechain is on the market through Town and Country for £125,000.

There is no chain. This charmingly quaint two bedroom mid terrace converted chapel is situated on a quiet lane on the edge of the village. As the name suggests "Swn Yr Afon" which is Welsh for Sound of the River, the property is located close to the river, where the flowing sounds are relaxing enough to calm you to sleep.

Accommodation at the property briefly comprises hallway, kitchen/breakfast room, lounge, two bedrooms and bathroom. There are gardens to the front and rear of the property with private parking at the rear. The house is warmed with thermodynamic radiators.

For more information about the property people are asked to contact Town and Country on 01691 679631.



Magnificent historic 15th century property available for let

CASTLE CAEREFINION
£800 PCM <<<

If you are seeking to optimise your lifestyle surroundings, then a restored award-winning, unique half-timbered aisled hall house, dating to the mid-15th century could be the answer.

Balfours has instructions to let the three-bedroom Long House, Ty Mawr, Castle Caerfinion, Ty Mawr meaning 'Big House' of its day. Today the timber-framed home comprises a magnificent full-height sitting room with a 17th century fireplace, a second south facing reception room, a study and kitchen. There is a master bedroom with en-suite, together with two further double bedrooms which have an adjacent bathroom. Charlotte George of Balfours and Tom Till, managing agent for the Powis Castle Estate, recently launched the property to let. Ty Mawr is available at £800pcm.

For more information call 01743 277069.

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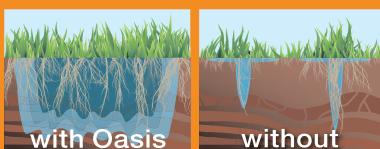
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17th century home provides for flexible accommodation

HOPE, LEIGHTON
£725,000

Little Hope, near Welshpool, will be a big hope and reward for someone providing a wonderful backdrop to happiness.

On the market with Balfours, this 17th century cottage has undergone a large extension. Currently it provides a family home and a highly successful bed and breakfast accommodation, however the layout is so flexible as to provide for two co-habiting families with separate quarters. Nestled in the hamlet of Hope, Leighton is just two miles from Welshpool.

The main cottage comprises a porch, large sitting room with inglenook fireplace, woodburner and French doors. Adjacent is the library with glazing and views to two aspects and the study. The morning room is the central point of the ground floor from which the stairs ascend to three bedrooms and a family bathroom. Beyond the morning room, the dining room is partially open plan to the kitchen. A



second study, cloak and utility complete the ground floor accommodation. Agent, Duncan Scobie, of Balfours, comments: "Evelyn and Mike Gregory have nurtured Little Hope to create a fresh and spacious home, together with a highly successful bed and breakfast business. The guest accommodation reflects this, it provides three spacious double bedrooms one with en-suite bathroom and the other two with en-suite shower rooms.

"A large guest dining/lounge spanning nearly six metres square and an independent guest kitchen allow the guest accommodation to be run totally separately; or for an extended family to enjoy."

Balfours are marketing Little Hope with a guide price of £725,000.

For more information call Duncan Scobie on 01743 353511 or visit www.balfours.co.uk



Recently modernised home within walking distance of town

OSWESTRY
£325,000 >>>

A recently modernised three-bedroomed detached home within walking distance of Oswestry has a lovely outlook across Oswestry Cricket Ground.

Having well-proportioned accommodation, the property on Morda Road is for sale through Bowen Son & Watson at £325,000. With gas central heating and double glazing, it has an entrance hall, a cloakroom/WC, a lounge, kitchen, breakfast area, a dining room and a sun room. There are three good-sized bedrooms and a family bathroom. Outside the garden has an enclosed lawn area with a patio. There is a gravelled driveway to the front and a rear driveway leading to the double garage with electric doors.

The town centre is a short walk away and has a host of shops, restaurants and other amenities.

Contact Bowen Son & Watson on 01691 652367.



Detached house with valley views comes with a large decked area

GARTH
£374,950 <<<

An individual detached house with valley views and first floor open plan living, Tyn-Y-Pistyll at Garth, Glyn Ceiriog, comes with a large timber decked area, landscaped gardens and woodland.

It is for sale through Morris Marshall & Poole at £374,950. Briefly the property comes with three bedrooms, a shower room and a bathroom.

A turning timber-built staircase rises up from the entrance hall to the upper level lobby with a tiled floor and external door to the rear.

Access leads through to the living area which has a multi-fuel stove fitted to the slate built fireplace, being dual aspect with a large picture window to the rear and concealed radiators. An open plan approach leads through to the dining/kitchen.

Contact Morris Marshall & Poole on 01691 679595 for more information.



The Ticket

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**COMIC ED'S
GOING TO
BYRNE IT UP**

INSIDE



YOUR WEEKLY ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

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Time to get ready for Byrne's night

Stand-up star Ed Byrne is returning to the West Midlands with his new show, Spoiler Alert. He will headline Stafford Gatehouse tomorrow and Birmingham Town Hall on Saturday.

Ed is on the road after a total sell-out Edinburgh Fringe run with his biggest ever tour to date. He says: "I originally intended to call the show 'I'll Millennial You in a Minute', but my promoter considered the title 'off-puttingly baffling'."

In the show, Ed explores the thin line between righteous complaining and brat-like whining and asks, 'are we right to be fed up, or are we spoiled?'

Ed is recognised as one of the finest observational comics in the industry. His TV credits include Mock The Week, Have I Got News For You, The Graham Norton Show, Live At The Apollo, The One Show, Comic Relief Bake Off 2015, The World's Most Dangerous Roads and, most recently, he and Dara O Briain filmed the follow up to their Big Adventure show for BBC Two entitled Dara and Ed's Road to Mandalay.

He will return to the region to headline Lichfield's Garrick on April 24.

Ed has been an acclaimed stand-up (with audiences and critics alike) for 20 years. His success with shows such as the Roaring Forties, Different Class and the 1998 Perrier-nominated A Night At The Opera led to him appearing on the box in the diverse likes of Mock The Week, Father Ted, The One Show and All Star Mr & Mrs, while his love of hillwalking resulted in him writing a regular column for The Great Outdoors magazine.

NATURAL

In fact, his love of natural history has crossed into television with appearances on The One Show (abseiling in Snowdonia), Countryfile (climbing Sgùrr Dearg, the 'inaccessible pinnacle on Skye) and presenting items on Volcano Live (BBC).

The Irish comic is firmly of a belief that the current breed of parents spoil their kids rotten whether it's to do with the ever-increasing size of garden trampolines, or his own kids' demand for elderflower cordial.

"My dad wasn't a bad dad, he was just a 1970s dad. If I could never see my children ever again from this moment on, I've already done more parenting than he did in my entire life. But, of course, I made a conscious decision that I was going to be an awesome dad. My wife will come back with tales from her friends of how awful their husbands are and she'll see me smiling and say 'alright, stop congratulating yourself just because such and such can't be left alone with their children for two minutes'."

In his new touring show, the perfectly-titled Spoiler Alert, Ed compares and contrasts the old-school child-rearing days with 21st century methods and suggests that there are different ways to learn how to be a mum or dad.

"I grew up in what I would call an aspirational household in that my parents bettered themselves over the course of my childhood. My mother was a radiographer and ended up a lecturer in radiography, while my dad was a sheet metal worker and went up to a supervisory role. I'd still say that you are expected to do a lot more parenting than our parents did and that's a weird thing because you tend to think that your parents are who you learnt parenting from. But you don't, really, it's more that you look around to see what's going on with other parents."

For the show, Ed extends his analysis on the culture of entitlement to look at areas where we could perhaps do with being spoiled a little bit more. "Where I think we're not acting spoiled enough is in the political arena. We have a tendency to accept what's happening and that's where we should be acting more entitled: we are literally entitled to the government we want. We're spoiled in all these little ways, but not spoiled enough."

As well as stories about his two young sons, Ed weaves in routines about running out of petrol in the most awkward place imaginable, helping rescue an injured

Byrne out – Ed brings his latest tour to Stafford and Birmingham



man in the Cairngorms, and the nation-dividing campaign and result of the EU referendum. His way of tackling Brexit is to draw an analogy with the time his son was determined to touch an electric fence with his dad trying to warn him of the dangers.

"I was telling the story of the electric fence for a while, and then suddenly it struck me that it was Brexit in microcosm. I don't want to alienate half of the population or maybe a third of my audience, but it works as an analogy whichever side you're on. The government told you not to do this and that it would be a terrible idea, but you said 'no, we want to do it anyway'. So now we're doing it and it's proving a terrible idea. I do think it's a fair analogy, but no doubt for some it will come across as me being a typical liberal elite Remoaner."

Spoiler Alert also continues a theme that he's tackled in previous shows, that of his gradual shift from being a working-class Dubliner to a fully paid-up rural-residing member of the middle classes. Where once he would do routines slating 4x4 owners, he is now the proud(ish) owner of such a vehicle. And in the poster for his tour, he brandishes other signifiers of social mobility: a bowtie and chainsaw. "It's one of two I own: that one is the smaller of the two," Ed remarks of his chainsaw rather than his neckwear. "I use it for firewood, both for my wood burning stove and also for the barbecue. The first time I used one I was fine, though I think it worried my parents

I keep a tour diary now of places where the curries are disappointing

that I had bought a chainsaw." Having premiered Spoiler Alert at the Fringe and used the month of August to hone the show, Ed is happy. "Being on stage is enjoyable and this part of the writing process is enjoyable. The empty page though is a scary thing. On the first leg of the tour I'll do about an hour and 15 minutes, plus I'll have a support act. I keep a tour diary now of places where the curries are disappointing and where they are good and where audiences have been good before."

● For more entertainment news and reviews see **The Ticket** in your Shropshire Star every Friday.

Flying start to plane restoration work

Work to restore a Second World War fighter plane is well under way at RAF Cosford Museum.

The task to assemble the Boulton Paul Defiant I, a two-seat turret fighter which was used at night between 1940 and 1942, was captured on film by enthusiasts at Old Classic Car and posted on Twitter by the museum staff.

The airframe is the single surviving complete example of the Defiant I and will be on display at the air show on June 10. It is part of the RAF Museum's collection and was built at Boulton Paul's factory in Pendeford, Wolverhampton, in 1938. The craft is promised to be the first

of many aircraft coming out on display for the centenary celebrations.

The air show will look back at a century of aviation and will include a first-of-its-kind display of 100 planes for 100 years.

The image shows work being carried out on the fuselage at the conservation centre.

Tickets are now on sale for the air show, which in 2017 pulled in more than 50,000 visitors from around the country. In addition to its plane conservation programme, the museum team is also busy working with schoolchildren taking part in a separate national glider making competition for pupils aged nine and

10-years-old. The Fly Me to the Line scheme will see primary schools across the country register for the project, then compete in regional finals which will see the best models to launch off the ground invited to the finals at Cosford on June 27. Kelly Harley, the museum's access and learning officer, said: "We are running it alongside Learning Partnerships as part science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) using soft play skills for primary schools.

"Around 120 schools have already signed up. They have got to make themselves a glider using foam board and other materials and the best designs will win."



Artist Daniel will be reaching new heights

De has captured the beauty of some of the region's most stunning countryside and now an artist will be testing his talents on the mountains of Switzerland.

Daniel Yeomans is setting off from his home town of Montgomery on a 10-week painting road trip of Switzerland, where he will also be opening an exhibition of his work.

He will drive out to Geneva before heading on to nearby Nyon, where he will open the exhibition. After that he says he will let the landscape dictate his trip. "I will just find a view and start to paint," he said. "I'll then go back to the same point for a few days to finish the painting.

"I'm going to be in Switzerland until April 1, and I'm planning to go to a few different mountain ranges.

"Verbier and Crans-Montana will definitely be some of the destinations but I'm not sure how many others I'll visit yet."

The trip will also be something of a homecoming for Daniel, who spent five years living in Switzerland after his fascination for travel drew him to the country at the age of 20.

It was after his time living and working in the Alps that he decided to pursue a career as a portrait and landscape artist, and went on to train at the Charles H. Cecil Studios in Florence.

Despite admitting he has plenty of inspiration on his doorstep, Daniel is itching to get back to Switzerland – for more reasons than one.

"I'm really looking forward to it," he said.

"The exhibition will be open for three days a week so I will have plenty of time to get out and do some painting, and skiing."

"I will be painting on a mountain and then ski down it

Daniel Yeomans hard at work in Mid Wales



once I've finished." Daniel's work can be found across Europe, Asia and America, and since returning to Mid Wales the 31-year-old has seen his paintings exhibited at Ellesmere College and the Willow Gallery in Oswestry.

He has painted some of the area's most stunning landscapes, including the Elan Valley, and in 2016 his portrait of Montgomery Town Crier Sue Blower was unveiled at the Senedd – the home of the Welsh

Government. One of his latest projects, 'Dystonia and Tim', was inspired by a man who came to watch him working at his home studio.

Touched by the visitor's determination to combat the effects of the neurological disorder dystonia with art therapy, poetry and drawing in his journal, Daniel decided to paint a life-sized portrait of him in an effort to raise thousands for Brain Research UK.

* OSWESTRY'S Willow Gallery is offering workshops and courses between now and April of this year, with some sessions being stand-alone and others being taught over multiple days. Led by artists with experience in teaching, the classes include landscape, watercolour techniques, speed drawing, abstract, oil painting, textile art, linocut/woodcut printing and ceramics. All sessions will take place at the Willow Gallery's Dunbabin Room and class sizes are limited to allow plenty of individual attention. Some courses are suitable for beginners, however there are others for those with more expertise or past experience. More information is available to book

NOTICE BOARD

are available on the website at www.willowgalleryyoswestry.org/ or over the phone on 01691657575.

* A NEW season of lunch-hour concerts at Shrewsbury's Civic church has been announced. Audiences continue to increase for the unique free lunch-hour concert series at St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury which restarts in February and continues until Christmas. There are over 50 concerts in 2018 – every Friday and the first Tuesday of each month all at 12.40pm; they last just 40 minutes, and concert-goers can park

from noon to 2pm free of charge. After Friday concerts there is a light lunch served in the church hall. The Tuesday events are always organ recitals, as are usually the third Fridays of each month. Concert director Richard Walker said: "Our audiences are enthusiastic and many regard Friday at St Chad's as the most enjoyable part of their week. Both the organ and the piano at St Chad's are the best church instruments for miles around, and excellent performers are constantly asking us to give them a platform. Where else can you find a regular concert series with free parking, no tickets required and lunch on site afterwards? Previous series have attracted audiences from all over the

West Midlands, and this series is just as attractive, with varied programmes presented by musicians of all ages."

Among the concerts will be a flute recital by Leonie Minty with Richard Walker on piano. Look out for Chetham's School of Music on March 2, May 11 and November 9, vocal students from Birmingham Conservatoire on April 27 and May 4, a guitar recital by Galina Vale on February 23 and music for harp played by Georgina Taylor on April 13. There will be a performance of Chausson's Piano Quartet on November 30 and an unusual chance to hear Alphorns when during a horn quartet concert on April 6. There are also concerts given by Shrewsbury High School on September 14.

Coming soon...

Comic Shazia in the county

Fresh from being ravaged by hunger and sand-flies on Bear Grylls' Celebrity Island, Shazia Mirza is coming to Shropshire later this year.

The comedian will bring her brand new show *With Love From St Tropez to Bridgnorth's Theatre on the Steps* on March 3. Her critically acclaimed 2016, and a sell-out international run of *The Kardashians Made Me Do It*, her show will see her travel across the whole of the United Kingdom. Her last show explored politically correct liberalism, the intrusion of ISIS into young British lives and jihadi brides and enjoyed four sell-out runs in London as well as the US, Sweden and Paris. This brand new tour is about lies, lies and more lies. "The truth is so 1980s, according to Shazia," said a spokesperson.

She was recently seen back to basics in Channel 4's *Celebrity Island* with Bear Grylls. She recently guested on ITV's *Jonathan Ross and Loose Women* and she is a regular panellist on Channel 5's *The Wright Stuff*.

In 2008 she was listed in *The Observer* as one of the 50 funniest acts in British comedy, won *COLUMNIST of the Year* at the prestigious PPA Awards for her fortnightly column in *The New Statesman* and won *The GQ Young Achiever of the Year Award*. For more details and to book tickets for the event go to the *Theatre on the Steps* website at www.theatreonthesteps.co.uk.



Folk acts lined up for festival

Music fans are in for a treat at this year's Shrewsbury Folk Festival with organisers announcing a whole host of top acts. American singer songwriter Gretchen Peters, Irish super group Usher's Island, festival favourites Show of Hands and former Bellowhead frontman Jon Boden with his band The Remnant Kings will join

Steelye Span, Peter Knight's Gigspanner Big Band, BBC Folk Award winner Daorí Farrell and Scottish folk rockers Skerryvore at the festival in August. Chinese flautist Guo Yue and Japanese drummer Joji Hirota will reunite for the festival with the London Taiko Drummers and one of the hit groups of the 2017 festival – Canadian band The Fitzgeralds – have been invited back due to popular demand. Other performers already signed up include Welsh indie roots band Rusty Shackle, The Rails, State of the Union – the duo of Boo Hewerdine and Brooks Williams, O'Hooley & Tidow, Megson, Blowzabella, Banter, Alden, Patterson & Dashwood, The Rogues Shanty Chorus, Emma Morton & The Graces, Midnight Skyracer, FOS Brothers, Inlay, and Foreign Affairs. Dance bands will be Blowzabella, Bedlam, Committee Band, Vertical Expression, Kirkophany and Out of Hand. The festival will take place at the West Mid Showground from August 24 to 27 with more artists to be revealed.

Director Sandra Surtees said: "The line up is shaping up to be as eclectic as ever with something for everyone."



Sweet success at show

The fans' favourite from last year's Great British Bake Off will be heading to Shropshire in his first appearance in the county. Liam Charles, who has been dubbed Cake Boy since his debut in the Channel 4

cooking programme, will headline the Festival of Food at Newport Show at Chetwynd Deer Park on July 14.

The 20-year-old drama student, the youngest competitor in the 2017 cohort of amateur bakers, won legions of followers with his natural charm and sense of humour.

The Londoner won star baker during pastry week and was also on the receiving end of a famed Hollywood handshake from judge Paul for his salted peanut butter millionaire shortbreads. He will give two 45-minute presentations in the food theatre at the show as well as meet fans.

The star guest was announced as tickets went on sale for the 2018 event. All prices have been frozen at 2017 rates and family passes have been expanded to include up to two adults and three children.



January 27



And They're Off for Sport Relief

5.40pm

Frankie Bridge, Martin Offiah, Ben Cohen, Russell Kane and Jenny Powell tackle the sporting challenge, while members of the public try to predict who will win.



Hugh's Wild West

6.15pm

Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall investigates efforts to bring beavers back to the Dorset-Devon border, and a swan herd at Abbotsbury Swannery rounds up his charges for a health check.



Take Me Out

6.45pm

A warehouse worker from Wolverhampton and a musician from Leicester are among the men seeking the approval of Paddy McGuinness's panel of 30 single ladies.



Village of the Year with Penelope Keith

8pm

Alex Langlands, Juliet Sargeant and Patrick Grant decide which five villages from this week's heats should progress to the grand final.



Blind Date

8pm

Paul O'Grady plays matchmaker for a reformed 'bad-boy' and a nightclub hostess, and past couples Jonathan and Kelly, and Joanna and David return to dish the dirt on their dates.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast.
 10.00 **Saturday Kitchen Live.** Comedian Phill Jupitus joins Matt Tebbutt in the studio kitchen, where she samples treats prepared by chefs Brad Carter and Jane Baxter. Olly Smith picks the wines.
 11.30 **Mary Berry Everyday.** The food writer celebrates dishes that exemplify indulgence. (R)
 12.00 **Football Focus.** Dan Walker and guests look ahead to the FA Cup fourth-round fixtures, including Newport County v Tottenham Hotspur and Liverpool v West Bromwich Albion.
 1.00 **BBC News; Weather.**
 1.15 **Tennis: Australian Open 2018.** Kat Downes presents action from the women's singles final on day 13 of the opening Grand Slam tournament of the year.
 2.30 **Live Bowls: World Indoor Championships.** Coverage of the open singles semi-finals from the Potters Leisure Resort in Hopton-on-Sea, as the players attempt to progress to the showpiece match.
 4.30 **Final Score.** A round-up of the classified results and this afternoon's news from the FA Cup, EFL and Scotland.
 5.25 **BBC News.**
 5.35 **Midlands Today; Weather.**
 5.40 **And They're Off for Sport Relief.** With contestants Frankie Bridge, Martin Offiah, Ben Cohen, Russell Kane and Jenny Powell.
 6.25 **Pointless Celebrities.** Mark Steel, Marcus Brigstocke, Nicky Campbell, Rachel Burden, Liz Kershaw, DJ Nihal, Shaun Keaveny and Nemone take part in a radio-themed edition of the quiz.
 7.15 **All Together Now.** New series. Rob Beckett hosts the musical talent show in which contestants must successfully encourage members of a 100-strong judging panel to sing along with them to win.
 8.20 **Casualty.** The ED staff deal with what is suspected to be a case of domestic abuse, and Ethan veers from one disaster to another during his first day as Clinical Lead.
 9.10 **BBC News; Weather.**
 9.30 **Hard Sun.** Tr Dennis becomes a figure of public hate after Blackwood declares only he can stop the killings. Meanwhile, Hicks learns the extent of Renko's investigation into the Butler murder.
 10.30 **Match of the Day: FA Cup Highlights.** Gary Lineker presents action from the fourth-round ties, including Newport County v Tottenham Hotspur at Rodney Parade and Liverpool v West Bromwich Albion at Anfield; **National Lottery Update.**
 12.00 **The NFL Show.** Mark Chapman is joined by Osi Umenyiora and Jason Bell to look ahead to Super Bowl LII, which takes place at US Bank Stadium in Minneapolis on February 4.
 12.30 **FILM: What Doesn't Kill You (2008).** A criminal tries to change and make things up to his family, but a friend tempts him to return to his crooked ways. Crime drama, starring Mark Ruffalo and Ethan Hawke.
 2.05 **Weather for the Week Ahead.**
 2.10 **BBC News.**

BBC2

6.05 **The Wonder of Animals.** (R)
 6.35 **Naomi's Nightmares of Nature.**
 7.05 **The Pets Factor.**
 7.30 **Matilda and the Ramsay Bunch.**
 7.45 **Matilda and the Ramsay Bunch.**
 8.00 **The Dengeneers.**
 8.30 **Deadly Top 10.** (R)
 9.00 **Robot Wars.** Including a robot designed by a nine-year-old girl. (R)
 10.00 **Robot Wars.** Featuring teams of holiday camp staff and engineering students. (R)
 11.00 **The Snow Wolf Family and Me.** (R)
 12.00 **The Hairy Bikers' Mediterranean Adventure.** The culinary delights of mainland France. (R)
 1.00 **A Vicar's Life.** New curate Fr Matthew Cashmore drums up interest in his church. (R)
 1.30 **FILM: The Diary of Anne Frank (1959).** Fact-based drama, starring Millie Perkins.
 4.15 **Italy's Invisible Cities.** Alexander Armstrong and Dr Michael Scott uncover the hidden history of Naples. (R)
 5.15 **Trust Me, I'm a Doctor.** Michael Mosley runs an experiment to find out which foods are best for providing iodine. (R)
 5.45 **Tom Kerridge: Lose Weight for Good.** The chef creates low-calorie alternatives to fast foods. (R)
 6.15 **Hugh's Wild West.** Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall investigates efforts to bring beavers back to the Dorset-Devon border, and a swan herd at Abbotsbury Swannery rounds up his charges for a health check.
 7.15 **A House Through Time.** David Olusoga follows the story of the Liverpool house residents from 1891 to 1945, including a family of saddlers who lived there for four decades and a docker with a secret. (R)
 8.15 **Dad's Army.** Mainwaring and the platoon dress as firemen to take part in an initiative exercise, but soon find themselves tackling a real fire. Comedy, starring Arthur Lowe and Clive Dunn. (R)
 8.45 **Grand Tours of Scotland's Lochs.** Paul Merton travels into the secret heart of the Rough Bounds of Knoydart, by way of Loch nan Uimh, Loch Morar, Loch Nevis and Loch Arkaig.
 9.15 **QI XL.** Joss Whedon, Stephen K Amos and Cally Beaton join regular panellist Alan Davies and host Sandi Toksvig in an extended edition of the unconventional quiz.
 10.00 **Darcey Bussell's New Dance.** The former ballerina reveals how street dance group Boy Blue Entertainment and Canadian-based ice dancing collective Le Patin Libre are helping to revolutionise modern dance.
 10.30 **FILM: Birdman: Or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance) (2014).** Premiere. A faded movie star wrestles with a personal crisis as he tries to put on a disaster-afflicted Broadway play. Oscar-winning drama, with Michael Keaton and Edward Norton.
 12.20 **Bowls: World Indoor Championships Highlights.**
 1.20 **FILM: Girl with a Pearl Earring (2003).** Period drama, starring Scarlett Johansson.
 2.55 **This Is BBC2.**

ITV

6.00 **CITV: Sooty 6.10 Bottom Knocker Street 6.20 Bottom Knocker Street**
 6.35 **Dino Dana 6.50 Super 4 7.00 Signed Stories: Share a Story 7.05 Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister Six**
 7.30 **Scrambled!: Scrambled!** Two hours of children's fun.
 7.35 **Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show.** Cat and mouse adventures. (R)
 7.55 **Scrambled!: Fangbone.** Bill puts on a cursed helmet. (R)
 8.10 **Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls.** (R)
 8.30 **Scrambled!: Be Cool, Scooby-Doo!** Adventures with the Scooby gang. (R)
 9.05 **Scrambled!: Wishfart.** (R)
 9.25 **ITV News.**
 9.30 **James Martin's Saturday Morning.** Milton Jones and Jun Tanaka join James in his kitchen, where he prepares deep-fried chilli beef and French onion soup.
 11.25 **The Hungry Sailors.** Dick and James Strawbridge arrive in Looe, Cornwall. (R)
 12.25 **Countrywise.** Ben Fogle takes part in a special survey in Hampshire. (R)
 12.55 **ITV News and Weather; Weather.**
 1.00 **Dancing on Ice.** Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby present disco week, as the remaining 11 celebrities perform to impress the judges and avoid having to compete in a skate-off. (R)
 3.15 **Catchphrase.** Guessing game, hosted by Stephen Mulhern. (R)
 4.00 **Tipping Point.** Game show, hosted by Ben Shephard. (R)
 5.00 **The Chase.** Quiz show, hosted by Bradley Walsh. (R)
 6.00 **ITV News Central; Weather.**
 6.05 **ITV News and Weather.**
 6.20 **New You've Been Framed!** Harry Hill narrates another round of viewer-submitted comedy clips, including a hoverboard destroying an office, and a man falling through a casino ceiling.
 6.45 **Take Me Out.** A warehouse worker from Wolverhampton and a musician from Leicester are among the men seeking the approval of Paddy McGuinness's panel of 30 single ladies.
 8.00 **The Voice UK.** The fourth round of Blind Auditions arrives, as Emma Willis invites more would-be pop icons to have their skills appraised by Jennifer Hudson, Tom Jones, Will.i.am and Olly Murs.
 9.30 **Through the Keyhole.** Stephen Mulhern, Louis Walsh and Rochelle Humes form the panel as Keith Lemon challenges them to guess the mystery owners of three more celebrity homes.
 10.30 **ITV News and Weather; Weather.**
 10.45 **FILM: Jaws: The Revenge (1987).** The remaining members of the Brody family are terrorised by a bloodthirsty great white shark in the Bahamas. Thriller sequel, starring Michael Caine, Lorraine Gary and Lance Guest.
 12.15 **Jackpot247.** Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofas, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team.
 3.00 **Babushka.** Game show hosted by Rylan Clark-Neal in which contestants open a set of giant Russian nesting dolls, with some empty and others containing prizes up to £10,000. (R)
 3.50 **ITV Nightscreen.**

Channel 4

6.15 **3rd Rock from the Sun.** Vicky gives birth. (R)
 6.40 **3rd Rock from the Sun.** Mary makes an indiscreet confession. (R)
 7.05 **The King of Queens.** Carrie asks Doug to ignore her birthday. (R)
 7.35 **The King of Queens.** Doug plans a Valentine's Day meal. (R)
 8.00 **Everybody Loves Raymond.** Debra and Ray's privacy is invaded. (R)
 8.25 **Everybody Loves Raymond.** Ray joins an American Civil War re-enactment society. (R)
 8.55 **Frasier.** Niles suspects Frasier of coveting his date. (R)
 9.30 **Frasier.** The Crane brothers believe they may be descended from Russian royalty. (R)
 10.00 **Frasier.** The shrink's obituary is published prematurely. (R)
 10.30 **The Big Bang Theory.** Raj's parents set him up on a blind date. (R)
 11.00 **The Big Bang Theory.** An invitation to a physics conference causes conflict. (R)
 11.25 **The Big Bang Theory.** Penny appears in a musical. (R)
 11.55 **The Simpsons.** Marge is arrested for shoplifting. (R)
 12.25 **The Simpsons.** Bart develops a crush on his babysitter. (R)
 12.55 **The Simpsons.** The family remembers Lisa's early days. (R)
 1.25 **Come Dine with Me.** Contestants in Birmingham try to throw the perfect dinner party. (R)
 2.25 **Coast vs Country.** A couple hoping to move from their family home in Berkshire to Devon. (R)
 3.25 **A Place in the Sun.** Searching for an apartment in Majorca. (R)
 4.30 **A Place in the Sun.** A Bristol couple search for a holiday home in Barbados. (R)
 5.30 **The Secret Life of the Zoo.** The keepers try to work out why male red panda Jung is losing weight. (R)
 6.30 **Channel 4 News.**
 7.00 **Great Canal Journeys.** Timothy West and Prunella Scales explore the Marne-Rhine Canal near France's border with Germany, where they get to grips with an unfamiliar system of locks. Last in the series. (R)
 8.00 **Village of the Year with Penelope Keith.** Alex Langlands, Juliet Sargeant and Patrick Grant decide which five villages from this week's heats should progress to the grand final.
 9.00 **Holocaust: The Revenge Plot.** The story of a band of Jewish vigilantes who sought to claim "an eye for an eye" from the German people on behalf of the six million Jews killed in the Holocaust.
 10.00 **FILM: The Monuments Men (2014).** A platoon of soldiers recovers stolen art treasures from the Nazis during the Second World War. Fact-based drama, directed by and starring George Clooney. With Matt Damon.
 12.15 **FILM: Snake Eyes (1988).** Thriller, starring Nicolas Cage.
 2.00 **The Last Leg.** A comic review of the past seven days. (R)
 2.55 **Hollyoaks.** Omnibus. Mandy and her hens prepare for her wedding day, but Scarlett has plans to threaten the big day. (R)
 5.10 **Coast vs Country.** (R)

Channel 5

6.00 **Milkshake!** Little Princess 6.10 Wanda and the Alien 6.20 Poppy Cat 6.35 Wissper 6.40 Milkshake! Monkey 6.45 Milkshake! Bopping About 6.50 Simon 6.55 Peppa Pig 7.05 Paw Patrol 7.15 Thomas & Friends 7.25 Fireman Sam 7.35 Olly the Little White Van 7.50 Blaze and the Monster Machines 8.15 Paw Patrol 8.35 Nella the Princess Knight 8.50 Noddy: Toyland Detective 9.05 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom 9.20 Shimmer and Shine 9.35 Digby Dragon 9.55 Peppa Pig 10.00 Peppa Pig 10.05 Olly the Little White Van 10.10 **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.**
 10.45 **Funniest Fails, Falls & Flops.** (R)
 11.10 **Police Interceptors.** (R)
 12.05 **Police Interceptors.** Stu deals with a case involving an alleged assault and a missing crossbow. (R)
 1.05 **The A-Team.** Part one of two. The gang helps two Native Americans. (R)
 2.05 **The A-Team.** Part two of two. The gang continues tracking wild mustangs. (R)
 3.00 **Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords.** Property developer Alex calls in an eviction specialist. (R)
 4.00 **Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords.** A landlady gets a shock when she finally gains access to her property. (R)
 5.00 **Rich House, Poor House.** Families from Lincolnshire swap places for a week. (R)
 6.00 **The Wonderful World of Puppies.** The development of puppies' senses, following the dalmatians as they have a hearing test and tracking a springer spaniel as he begins training to become a search-and-rescue dog.
 7.00 **Greatest Ever Celebrity Wind Ups.** Joe Pasquale revisits more celebrity pranks, including the time Justin Bieber's elaborate trick for Taylor Swift and incognito meet-and-greets with Michael Bublé and Mark Hamill.
 8.00 **Blind Date.** Paul O'Grady plays matchmaker for a reformed "bad-boy" and a nightclub hostess, and past couples Jonathan and Kelly, and Joanna and David return to dish the dirt on their dates.
 8.55 **5 News Weekend.**
 9.05 **Football on 5: The Championship.** Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games, including Bristol City v Queens Park Rangers, and Ipswich Town v Wolverhampton Wanderers.
 10.00 **Celebrity Big Brother.** Catching up with the celebrities as they react to Friday night's double eviction, revealing how the departure of two housemates has affected the remaining contestants.
 11.05 **The X-Files.** Mulder and Scully uncover a medical laboratory where extreme genetic experimentation has been going on for decades, breeding subjects who possess unexpected and dangerous powers. (R)
 12.00 **Britain's Greatest Bridges.**
 12.10 **SuperCasino.**
 3.10 **FILM: Enemies Closer (2013).** Action adventure, starring Jean-Claude Van Damme.
 4.30 **Access.**
 4.45 **House Doctor.** (R)
 5.10 **Wildlife SOS.** (R)
 5.35 **House Busters.** (R)

January 28



Still Open All Hours

7.30pm

Granville tries to stop Madge from moving away and taking Mavis with her - but there is only one person who can change their minds, and he has been dead for years.



Dragons' Den

8pm

More entrepreneurs present their money-making ideas to the panellists, including pitches for natural raw dog food, a date-based smoothie and a free-running exercise regime.



You've Got Mail

2.10pm

Two rivals in the bookshop business fall in love over the internet, unaware they know and dislike each other in the real world. Romantic comedy, starring Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks.



SAS: Who Dares Wins

9pm

The remaining recruits are challenged to dive blindfolded into a reservoir, before moving on to the most psychologically demanding stage of training - resisting interrogation.



Billionaire Kids: Diamond Lives

8pm

Documentary about the luxurious lives of children from wealthy families, as well as the companies able to make a profit by catering to the youngsters' every whim.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast.
 7.30 Match of the Day: FA Cup Highlights. Gary Lineker presents action from the fourth-round ties, including Newport County v Tottenham Hotspur at Rodney Parade and Liverpool v West Bromwich Albion at Anfield. (R)
 9.00 The Andrew Marr Show.
 10.00 The Big Questions. Nicky Campbell presents moral and religious discussions on topical issues from Northumbria Students' Union, Newcastle.
 11.00 Sunday Politics West Midlands. The week's events at Westminster, presented by Sarah Smith. Including a regional round-up.
 12.15 Bargain Hunt. Radio 1 DJs Dev Griffin and Alice Levine and Radio 4 presenters Nick Robinson and Aasmah Mir battle it out in east London's Spitalfields market. (R)
 1.00 BBC News; Weather.
 1.15 Money for Nothing. Sarah Moore transforms items reclaimed from a recycling centre in the West Midlands. (R)
 2.00 Songs of Praise. Sean Fletcher volunteers with his church's work to help the homeless.
 2.35 Big Cats. Research into wild cats, including discoveries about the cheetah, and conservation programmes, which have brought animals from the brink of extinction. Last in the series. (R)
 3.35 Match of the Day Live: The FA Cup. Cardiff City v Manchester City (Kick-off 4.00pm). Coverage of the fourth-round clash.
 6.05 BBC News.
 6.20 Midlands Today; Weather.
 6.30 Countryfile. Matt Baker visits a sheep farm in Crieff run by two brothers who are preparing to follow in the footsteps of their father and sister by joining the British Olympic curling team.
 7.30 Still Open All Hours. Granville tries to stop Madge from moving away and taking Mavis with her - but there is only one person who can change their minds, and he has been dead for years.
 8.00 Call the Midwife. Lucille is on duty when a friend of Valerie's goes into labour - but when the patient's health deteriorates, the new recruit is accused of incompetence by her rabbit mother.
 9.00 McMafia. Alex fears his family are under threat when Vadim learns the truth about him - but his paranoia about a surveillance operation drives a wedge between him and Rebecca.
 10.00 BBC News.
 10.20 Midlands Today; Weather.
 10.30 Match of the Day: FA Cup Highlights. Action from the latest fourth-round ties - Chelsea v Newcastle United and Cardiff City v Manchester City.
 11.05 The Women's Football Show. A look at the biggest issues in the women's game, focusing on matters at both club and international level.
 11.40 Teenage Knife Wars. Former England footballer Jermaine Jenas returns to his home city of Nottingham to investigate the spike in knife crime that is devastating young lives and families. (R)
 12.10 Weather for the Week Ahead.
 12.15 BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 A to Z of TV Gardening. Carol Kirkwood looks at subjects beginning with the letters X, Y and Z. (R)
 6.20 The Instant Gardener. An overgrown garden in Bradford. (R)
 7.05 Gardeners' World. Monty Don makes a start on his new scented border. (R)
 7.35 Monty Don's Paradise Gardens. Part two of two. The horticultural expert visits Turkey and India. (R)
 8.35 Countryfile. The flowering of spring plants in the winter. (R)
 9.30 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. Matt Tebbutt presents highlights of the series.
 11.00 Food & Drink. A discussion on luxury dishes, with guest Daniel Clifford. (R)
 11.30 Homes Under the Hammer. Properties in Derby and Kent. (R)
 12.00 Nature's Perfect Partners: Natural World. Some of the most extraordinary inter-species partnerships in the wild. (R)
 1.00 Tennis: Australian Open 2018. The men's singles final.
 2.30 Live Bowls: World Indoor Championships. Coverage of the open singles final.
 5.15 Ski Sunday. The World Cup meeting from Schladming in Austria.
 6.00 Britain's Cycling Superheroes: The Price of Success. The controversy surrounding Britain's international cyclists and the two men who have led the nation to recent successes in both the Olympics and the Tour de France. (R)
 7.00 Yellowstone: The Toughest Spring. Cameras follow as winter turns to spring in Yellowstone during 2016, capturing the re-emergence of a range of animals, who leave their winter dens to explore the new, green world. (R)
 8.00 Dragons' Den. More entrepreneurs present their money-making ideas to the panellists, including pitches for natural raw dog food, a date-based smoothie and a free-running exercise regime.
 9.00 Chris Packham: In Search of the Lost Girl. The naturalist goes in search of a member of a nomadic tribe in Sumatra whom he photographed 20 years previously, and discovers the impact of deforestation on the country.
 10.00 The Mash Report. (R)
 10.30 Insert Name Here. Tom Davis, Kate Williams, Robert Peston and Aisling Bea join captains Richard Osman and Josh Widdicombe to answer Sue Perkins' questions about famous namesakes. Last in the series. (R)
 11.00 Cleverman. New series. Koen comes back to life stronger than ever, a mysterious stranger comes to the aid of his surviving followers and Slade begins carrying out experiments on the Haires.
 11.55 FILM: Norfolk (2015). Premiere. A mercenary leads an idyllic life with his son, until the day when a mysterious stranger pushes him into one last mission. Drama, with Denis Menochet and Barry Keoghan.
 1.15 Sign Zone: Question Time. Topical debate from Dumfries, chaired by David Dimbleby. (R)
 2.15 Sign Zone: Holby City. Hanssen is pushed to the brink. (R)
 3.15 Sign Zone: Holby City. Hanssen is pushed to the brink. (R)
 This is BBC2.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty 6.10 Bottom Knocker Street 6.20 Bottom Knocker Street 6.35 Dino Dana 6.50 Super 4 7.00 Signed Stories: Share a Story 7.05 Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister Six
 7.30 Scrambled!: Scrambled! Two hours of children's fun.
 7.35 Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. Cat and mouse adventures. (R)
 7.55 Scrambled!: Ben 10. The youngster fights more colourful foes.
 8.10 Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. The bumbling blockhead is arrested. (R)
 8.30 Scrambled!: Spy School. The cadets must save the world's pollen.
 9.05 Scrambled!: Wishart. (R)
 9.25 ITV News.
 9.30 River Monsters. A possible goonch catfish in Nepal. (R)
 10.00 Peston on Sunday. Political magazine.
 11.00 The Martin Lewis Money Show. A look at credit scores. (R)
 11.30 The Voice UK. The fourth round of Blind Auditions arrives. (R)
 12.55 ITV News and Weather; Weather.
 1.10 Britain's Brightest Family. Two families compete in the third heat of the knock out tournament. (R)
 1.40 The Cruise: Return to the Mediterranean. The staff compete for the employee of the month award. (R)
 2.10 FILM: You've Got Mail (1998). Romantic comedy, starring Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan.
 4.30 ITV News Central; Weather.
 4.40 ITV News and Weather.
 5.00 The Chase: Celebrity Special. With Jonathan Ross, Katy Brand, Chris Hollins and Jo Wood. (R)
 6.00 Dancing on Ice. Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby present the skating challenge, with the 10 remaining contestants performing to avoid elimination.
 8.00 Vera. A teenage boy is found dead in a reservoir near a remote rural town. Vera takes on the case, and uncovers a web of fractured relationships within the community. Last in the series.
 10.00 ITV News and Weather; Weather.
 10.15 Peston on Sunday. Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston, with Allegra Stratton. (R)
 11.10 Next of Kin. Mona returns to the UK determined to investigate Danny's suspected links to radical Islam, but her efforts to get her nephew to safety have dire consequences for the family. (R)
 12.05 Great Art. Tim Marlow tells the story of 17th-century Dutch master Rembrandt, focusing on work exhibited at London's National Gallery and Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum in 2014/2015. (R)
 1.00 Jackpot247. Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofas, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team.
 3.00 Sunday Night at the Palladium. Acts include Nicole Scherzinger, Kaiser Chiefs and Tommy Tiernan. (R)
 3.50 ITV News.
 5.05 The Jeremy Kyle Show. The host invites guests to air their differences over family and relationship issues, and provides them with his own brand of no-nonsense advice. (R)

Channel 4

6.05 Kirstie's Fill Your House for Free. Kirstie Allsopp creates a kitchen-diner makeover. (R)
 6.20 The King of Queens. Carrie dates the cop who gave her a speeding ticket. (R)
 6.45 The King of Queens. Doug is promoted. (R)
 7.10 Everybody Loves Raymond. Ally researches the family tree. (R)
 7.35 Everybody Loves Raymond. Marie's meatballs leave Debra in a stew. (R)
 8.00 Frasier. Frederick visits for Thanksgiving. (R)
 8.30 Frasier. Part one of two. A bout of back pain has unexpected consequences. (R)
 9.00 Frasier. Part two of two. Niles clashes with girlfriend Mel. (R)
 9.30 Sunday Brunch. With guests Phil Daniels, Nigel Havers and Vicki Pattison.
 12.30 Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. Jamie Oliver and Jimmy Doherty are joined by Joanna Lumley in their cafe. (R)
 1.30 Jamie's Quick & Easy Food. Recipes include sesame seared tuna and a messy meatball bun. (R)
 2.00 The Simpsons. With the guest voice of Jack Black. (R)
 2.30 The Simpsons. Sideshow Bob and his family plot to kill Bart. (R)
 2.55 The Simpsons. Homer wakes up to find his family missing. (R)
 3.25 FILM: Garfield: A Tale of Two Kitties (2006). Family comedy, with the voice of Bill Murray.
 4.55 FILM: How to Train Your Dragon (2010). Animated fantasy, with the voice of Jay Baruchel.
 6.40 Channel 4 News.
 7.00 Posh Pawn. James meets 1980s pop star Lee John, who is hoping to sell some jewellery, and test drives an Austin A35 van.
 8.00 The Biggest Little Railway in the World. The track approaches Inverness, where a disagreement breaks out over whether to replace the steam engine with an electric one. At Loch Ness, Molly considers quitting the project.
 9.00 SAS: Who Dares Wins. The remaining recruits are challenged to dive blindfolded into a reservoir, before moving on to the most psychologically demanding stage of training - resisting interrogation.
 10.00 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. Jimmy Carr hosts the comical words-and-numbers quiz, with Alan Carr and Josh Widdicombe taking on Joe Wilkinson and Sara Pascoe. Bill Bailey helps out in Dictionary Corner. (R)
 11.00 FILM: Side Effects (2013). A psychiatrist finds his life unravelling after a drug he prescribes to a patient causes disturbing personality changes. Thriller, starring Jude Law and Rooney Mara.
 1.00 Holocaust: The Revenge Plot. The story of a band of Holocaust survivors who sought vengeance against Germany. (R)
 1.55 The Supervet. (R)
 2.50 Coast vs Country. (R)
 3.45 KOTV Boxing Weekly.
 4.10 Coast vs Country. (R)
 5.05 Location, Location, Location. (R)

Channel 5

6.00 Milkshake! Little Princess 6.10 Wanda and the Alien 6.20 Poppy Cat 6.35 Whisper 6.40 Milkshake! Monkey 6.45 Milkshake! Bopping About 6.50 Simon 6.55 Peppa Pig 7.05 Paw Patrol 7.15 Thomas & Friends 7.25 Fireman Sam 7.40 Olly the Little White Van 7.45 Blaze and the Monster Machines 8.10 Paw Patrol 8.40 Noddy: Toyland Detective 9.00 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom 9.15 Shimmy and Shine 9.30 Digby Dragon 9.45 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Mikey loses control of his mind.
 10.20 Football on 5: The Championship. Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games. (R)
 11.15 Police Interceptors. Dog handler Jimmy finds a dangerous weapon. (R)
 12.15 Police Interceptors. The firearms team looks for two men seen in possession of a sawn-off shotgun. (R)
 1.15 FILM: Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves (1991). Action adventure, starring Kevin Costner.
 4.15 FILM: A Cinderella Story (2004). Romantic comedy, starring Hilary Duff and Chad Michael Murray.
 5.20 5 News Update.
 5.25 FILM: A Cinderella Story (2004). Concluded.
 6.00 FILM: Johnny English Reborn (2011). A bumbling former secret agent is lured out of seclusion to foil an attempt to assassinate the premier of China. Spy comedy sequel, starring Rowan Atkinson and Gillian Anderson.
 8.00 Billionaire Kids: Diamond Lives. Documentary about the luxurious lives of children from wealthy families, as well as the companies able to make a profit by catering to the youngsters' every whim.
 8.55 5 News Weekend.
 9.00 Celebrity Big Brother. With two housemates evicted on Friday night, the remaining celebrities embark on their final week, knowing only one of them can be crowned winner on Friday night.
 10.05 FILM: The Boy Next Door (2015). Premiere. A newly single teacher's flirtation with a handsome teenager living next door begins to spiral out of control. Thriller, starring Jennifer Lopez and Ryan Guzman.
 11.35 FILM: Her Last Will (2016). Premiere. A conwoman hatches a plan to drive an old woman insane to allow her children to inherit the family fortune. Thriller, starring Rya Kihilsted and Patrick Fischler.
 1.15 SuperCasino. Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team.
 3.10 Celebrity 100 Per Cent Hotter: The BIG Challenge. The stylists provide makeovers for two celebrities known for their flamboyant fashions - Gemma Collins and Christopher Biggins. (R)
 4.00 Britain's Greatest Bridges. The Clifton Suspension Bridge, which was in part designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, though he did not live to see its eventual completion. (R)
 4.45 House Doctor. Hall and living-room makeovers. (R)
 5.10 Great Artists. (R)

32 Trust ahead on drive for healthy drinks

NHS England has announced plans for a ban on sugary drinks in hospital canteens – but the trust which runs Shropshire's two main hospitals has already taken steps when it comes to promoting healthy eating.

Under the new NHS plans the drinks will be banned from hospital canteens, shops and vending machines if trusts fail to take action to reduce sales.

Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust (SaTH), which runs the Princess Royal Hospital (PRH) in Telford and Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (RSH), has already taken positive steps to reduce the availability of sweets and sugared drinks.

The trust has ended the sale of sugared drinks and confectionery aimed at children at its outlets and vending machines at the Shropshire Women and Children's Centre at PRH.

It follows a move which saw SaTH increase the cost of sugared drinks by 10p, with the additional money raised used to fund material to raise awareness of the risks of sugar in food and drink.

Further measures have also been undertaken, including removing sugared items from promotions and meal deals, the introduction of sugar-free syrups and real fruit smoothies at Caffe Bistro and significantly reducing the availability of sugared drinks.

Parking fees defended by hospital bosses

HOSPITALS in Shropshire have defended the use of parking charges.

The trust running Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and Telford's Princess Royal Hospital raised £1.5 million in parking fees, figures reveal.

And nationally, NHS hospitals made a record £174 million in the last year from charging patients, visitors and staff for car parking. Julia Clarke, director of corporate governance at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, said: "Whilst we know that the issue of car parking charges is an emotive one, there is a misconception that all of the money collected goes to the company which manages the car parks."

"These figures show how much actually comes to the trust to help pay for improvements in patient care. Our annual income from parking pays for the equivalent of about 40 staff nurses. Our hospitals were both built at a time when there were half the number of staff and half the number of expected visitors to them. Without a professionally managed car park management service the situation for people trying to park would undoubtedly be much worse. Our charges are still among the lowest in the country, and we are also working hard to make alternatives to the car more attractive for both patients and our own staff."

Rural areas high on drink-drive list

MORE motorists are charged with drink-driving in largely rural areas – and Shropshire and Mid Wales are among the worst areas.

New figures place Dyfed-Powys, West Mercia and Staffordshire in the list of 10 police areas with the highest rate of prosecutions.

Figures indicate Lincolnshire prosecutes the most per population, followed by North Wales, Warwickshire, Dyfed-Powys and North Yorkshire. West Mercia is seventh on the list and Staffordshire eighth.

The results, based on Freedom of Information requests, prompted calls for better public transport in rural areas and warning to anyone tempted to drink and drive over the festive period.

A total of 31 forces out of 45 provided figures over a 12-month period to May 2017.

The results showed that Lincolnshire charged 1,035 motorists, 14 per 10,000 population. North Wales Police was second with 11.2 charges per 10,000 followed by Warwickshire Police with 10.5, Dyfed-Powys with 9.5 and North Yorkshire with 9.2.

The figure for West Mercia is 8.9 per cent and Staffordshire 8.89 per cent.

The figures compare to urban West Midlands, where the figure was 6.47.

Farmers warned to be on guard against criminals as agricultural payments start

Report by Karen Compton

DYFED-POWYS Police has warned the farming community to be extremely wary of any suspicious calls, texts or emails as a scam specifically targeting the agricultural sector has been identified.

During December farmers started to receive payments through the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy).

Information about the payments, including the recipients' names and the amount paid, is publicly available, meaning criminals are able to directly target victims making their approaches appear more convincing.

The scam communications will typically claim that fraud has been detected on the farmer's bank account and that urgent action is required to safeguard funds.

Advice on how to avoid this type of scam:

Be wary of:

* Any calls, texts or emails purporting to be from your bank, the police, a Government body or other organisation asking for personal or financial details, or for you to transfer money.

* Cold callers who suggest you hang up the phone and call them back. Fraudsters can keep your phone line open by not putting down the receiver at their end.

Request

* Any request to check that the number showing on your telephone display matches an organisation's registered telephone number. The display cannot be trusted, as the number showing can be altered by the caller.

Remember:

* You will never be asked for your 4 digit PIN or your online banking password, or for you to transfer money to a new account for "fraud reasons".

* If you receive a suspicious call, hang up, wait five minutes to clear the line, or where possible use a different phone line, then call your bank or card issuer on their advertised number to report the fraud.

Never disclose your:

* Four digit card PIN to anyone, including the bank or police.

* Your password or online banking codes.

* Personal details unless you are certain you know who you are talking to. People are not always who they say they are.

New crime statistics flag up officers' success rates

Report by Deborah Hardiman

ROBBERY and burglary suspects are more likely to be arrested in Mid Wales than anywhere else in England and Wales.

Statistics from the Home Office Crime Outcomes Report show that Dyfed-Powys Police has the lowest rate of no offender found.

The force had a total of 23,268 crimes reported in the past year.

In 6,963 of those crimes – or 30 per cent – the person responsible was not identified.

The statistics reveal that performances by different forces vary considerably across the country and overall officers have failed to identify a suspect in more than half of all crimes reported to them.

The statistics revealed that out of 80,936 crimes reported to West Mercia Police, who cover Shropshire and Worcestershire, in 36,109, or 45 per cent, no suspect was found.

Drivers

In the West Midlands drivers whose vehicles were stolen were the least likely to see an arrest, with police failing to identify suspects in nine of ten cases while in Greater Manchester officers failed to identify a suspect in almost 90.6 per cent of all burglaries reported.

Detective Chief Supt Shane Williams, of Dyfed-Powys Police, said: "In Dyfed-Powys Police we are fortunate to experience relatively low numbers of reported crime but it is pleasing to note we have identified suspects in approximately 70 per cent of all reported crime."

"Our priority is recognising and addressing vulnerability in all crimes and investigations and we recognise further work is needed to improve performance in crime areas such as robbery and burglary."

Deputy Chief Constable Amanda Blakeman, of West Mercia Police, said "We continue to do everything we can to tackle and reduce crime."

"We understand the impact of someone breaking into your home or being threatened in a robbery can never be underestimated."

"We are aware the figures released show an increase in reported crime and nationally it is acknowledge the demands on the police have increased. It is for that reason tackling and reducing these crimes will remain a priority. The work we have to do to tackle these crimes would not be possible without the close support of our community and we will continue to target our resources to tackle the issues highlighted."

Canal restoration to push ahead this year



The Montgomery Canal runs through parts of Shropshire and Mid Wales, including Welshpool. There are plans to fully restore the waterway.

THE past, present and future of an historic waterway will be celebrated during 2018.

The Montgomery Canal restoration has been on-going for almost half a century.

The coming year will see some major engineering works to open up more sections of the waterway, which ran from the junction with the Llangollen canal near Ellesmere, past Oswestry and across the Welsh border to Newtown. At the moment about half of the 35-mile canal is open. Recently £4.2m of work to restore a further part of the canal began thanks to a £2.53m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Expected to be completed in 2020 it will see a further one and a quarter miles of the canal and a "winding hole" – a turning point for narrowboats – reopen to Crickheath, Shropshire.

There will also be improved access to the canal, new nature reserves created and almost four miles of towpath between Welshpool and Llanymynech rebuilt.

The project is also supported with funding from Powys County Council, Shropshire Union Canal Society, Inland Waterways Association, and the Friends of the Montgomery Canal.

Canal enthusiasts from across Britain will descend on the canal to help restore part of

the waterway. Canal camps are organised by the national Waterway Recovery Group and its 2018 programme will feature 28 canal camps across 13 different waterways including the Montgomery Canal.

More than 400 volunteers are expected to sign up to the week-long residential camps.

They will be supporting the work being carried out by local canal restoration groups to help return canals back to navigation.

Those heading for the Montgomery Canal will work between Redwith Bridge and Brymbo Bridge, focusing on repairing a leaking section of canal.

Region plays its part in setting new 'green' records

MORE than a dozen new "green" records were set in 2017 for Britain's power sector – with Mid Wales and Mid Wales playing their part.

Rising solar and wind generation has seen the use of coal increasingly pushed off the grid.

The shift to renewables, with record moments of output for solar, wind and hydro-power, meant new low levels of carbon pollution from electricity were seen.

And the cost of new offshore wind tumbled in the latest Government auctions for support for the technology.

The region is home to a range of renewable sites, including several large windfarms in Mid Wales and a number of solar farms in Shropshire.

Last year has been hailed by environmental campaigners as the "greenest year ever", with 2018 expected to see an even cleaner power sector.

Gareth Redmond-King, from conservation charity WWF, said: "2017 has been an amazing year for renewable electricity in Britain, we have never been cleaner or greener, and we are

on course for an even better year in 2018. Climate change is wreaking havoc on our nature and wildlife, but we are at last facing up to the challenge, turning our backs on polluting fossil fuels and embracing a new clean future."

But with the UK not yet on track to meet legal targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions in the coming years, more needed to be done to support renewable energy, make heating buildings cleaner and drive the switch to electric vehicles, WWF urged.

2017 saw 13 new records including the first

24-hour period without coal generation since the Industrial Revolution, the longest period without coal generation lasting 40 hours and 35 minutes, and the greenest summer ever, with almost 52 per cent of electricity generation from low carbon sources.

Duncan Burt, from National Grid, which verified the records, said it had been an exciting year managing "many network firsts".

And he added: "We planned for these changes to the energy landscape, and continue to do so as the energy system evolves."

Local Specialists

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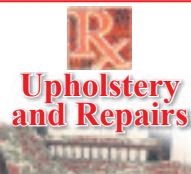
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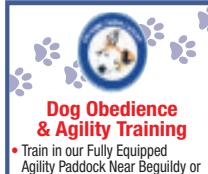


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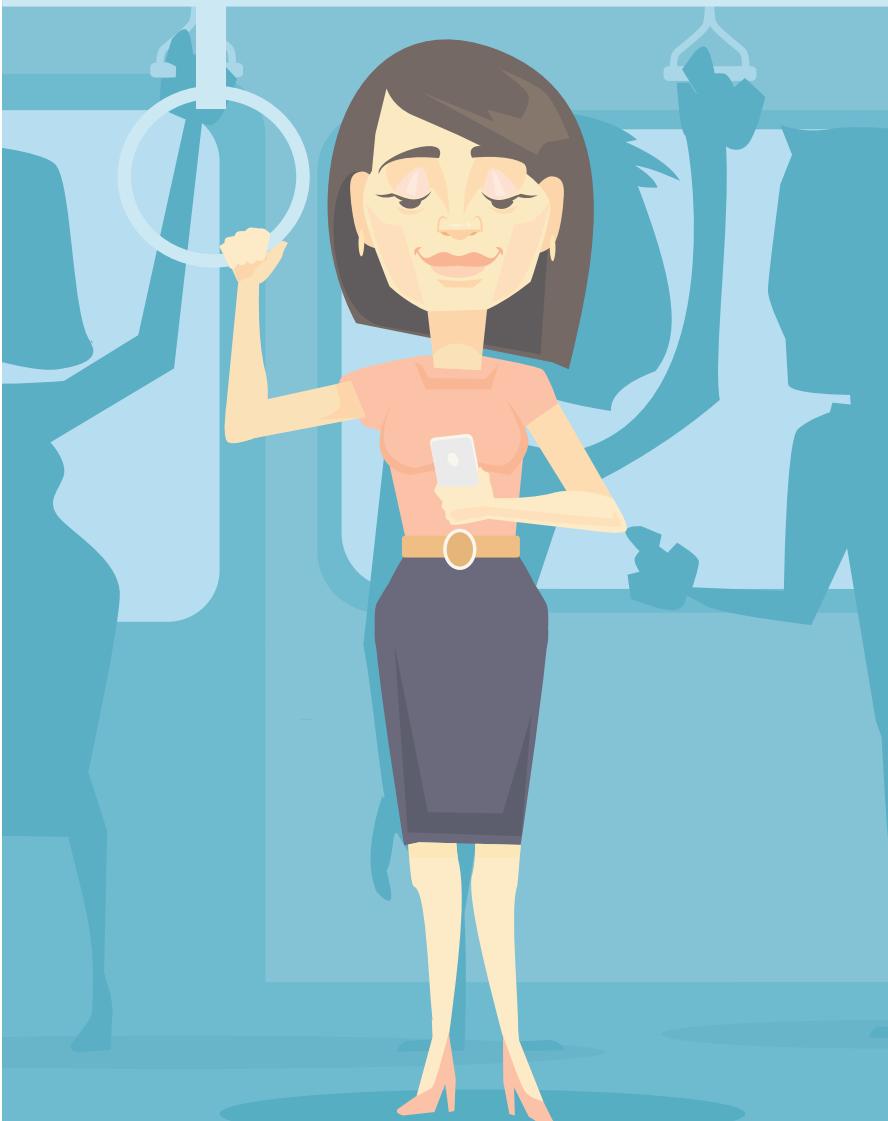
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A very decent, inexpensive vehicle

By Carmel Stewart

SsangYong is well-known for its big, rugged 4x4 vehicles which can pull several tonnes in the shape of horse boxes, trailers and caravans.

Less well-known, perhaps, are its smaller vehicles which can still pull the family caravan and loads up to two tonnes but are less chunky in appearance. One such is the Korando SUV which is more a family car than a workhorse, being a comfortable, reasonably priced five-seater with a decent, flat loading boot and off-roading abilities should circumstances require.

On-demand

It is powered by a 2.2 litre turbocharged, Euro 6 compliant SsangYong-built diesel engine linked to either a six-speed manual transmission or six-speed automatic with either front-wheel-drive or an intelligent, on-demand, all-wheel drive system.

The advanced 4x4 system has two settings. For the most part it operates in 2WD for optimum fuel efficiency but when sensors detect slippage – as with snow/rain/rough surfaces – the 4WD system kicks in, sending torque to where it is needed most.

In extreme circumstances it is possible to lock it off so that drive is allocated equally between front and rear wheels, providing the best grip and control for low-speed manoeuvres.

The recently facelifted version adds a more modern dash, redesigned chunky steering wheel, updated styling, favouring rounded



All cars get a five-year limitless guarantee edges, discreet creases and a new grille, headlights, fog lamps and daytime running lights.

As before, the rear seats can recline when in use but can also fold flat to allow for more load lugging and there is no transmission tunnel which means the middle rear seat passenger is that much more comfortable.

There are four models on offer: the two-wheel drive SE; the SE 4x4; the ELX 4x4; and the ELX with automatic transmission. Prices range from £15,800 to £23,500.

Some of the glossy mags have given the Korando a hard time but really it is a very decent, inexpensive vehicle. It'll not set the tarmac on fire nor will it traverse rivers deep, mountains high – although it'll have a pretty good go at it – but it'll get you safely through a shallow stream and across a muddy field.



Towing a caravan, trailer or horse box is no problem for the SsangYong Korando SUV

On the road it is comfortable and composed unless really pushed. Country lanes at speed will induce a certain amount of body roll – slow down and the problem is solved.

All Korando models come with a very decent standard kit list. The entry-level SE has six airbags, air-conditioning, cruise control, electric windows front and rear, Bluetooth

connectivity, electrically operated and heated door mirrors with paddle lamps, roof rails, alloy wheels, ESP and hill start assist.

The top spec ELX adds a leather interior, heated front and rear seats, heated steering wheel, a powered driver's seat, front and rear parking sensors, a rear-view camera, seven-inch touchscreen, RDS radio and TomTom sat

nav plus distinctive 18-inch diamond-cut alloys. All models come with a five-year limitless mileage warranty.

SsangYong cars are manufactured in South Korea by SsangYong Motor, which is 73 per cent owned by the Indian engineering conglomerate Mahindra & Mahindra, and imported into the UK by SsangYong Motor UK.

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This Vauxhall is real player in sector

By Graham Breeze

If you're looking to move into the Sports Tourer sector and are watching the pennies than the Vauxhall Insignia might just be what you have been looking for.

The latest arrival is a real step up from the old model and with prices starting at less than £20,000 is likely to win sales from a lot of the pricier options in the sector.

The Vauxhall Insignia Sports Tourer is an eye-catcher with long sleek looks and much more practical than its predecessor. There are obvious attractions for the fleet market but this model will also appeal to the man or woman looking for that extra bit of space to transport a growing family.

The length of the boot has grown by 97mm to 2055mm versus the previous model and 40/20/40 foldable seats are standard across the range, making it even more practical.

For those pulling a caravan or a trailer, towing capacity for the Sports Tourer is up to 2200kg.

The Tourer is 200kg lighter than its predecessor, thanks to use of lightweight materials and more efficient packaging allowing for all-wheel-drive system with torque vectoring and the new eight-speed automatic transmission.

Next generation IntelliLux LED matrix lighting, Lane Keep Assist, Head-up Display and unique AGR-certified premium seats, front and rear seat heating and a heated windscreen are a few examples of improved safety levels.

Outstanding infotainment and connectivity are also on board thanks to the latest

generation IntelliLink systems and Vauxhall OnStar, which offers even more functionality. The Insignia is also the first Vauxhall with an active aluminium bonnet, improving pedestrian protection considerably.

A prominent front grille and Monza Concept-inspired headlights make the vehicle stand out and the stance is also emphasised an extended wheelbase and a front overhang that has been reduced by 30 millimetres. Silver roof rails make it look lower, and emphasise the high-quality design.

Features

Although prices start under £20,000 we put the Sri Nav 1.6 Turbo D ecoTEC to the test hitting the road at £22,740.

Winter pack IntelliLux LED, parking sensors, leather seats, eight inch instrument display, a heads up system, 18 inch alloys, a driving assistance pack and brilliant paint finish pushed the price up to just under £28,000 though.

Standard features on the test model included, keyless entry, heated door mirrors, front fogs, tinted rear windows, automatic wipers, silver-effect roof rails, leather steering wheel, adjustable steering column, sports front seats, sports pedals and twin user rear USB sockets.

You also get a fully integrated European SatNav system, Bluetooth, seven speakers, Vauxhall On Star, electronic stability control, anti-locking brakes, driving assistance pack, six airbags and a security alarm system.

Most of the functions are controlled via the



The Vauxhall Insignia Sports Tourer is an eye-catcher with long sleek looks and is much more practical than its predecessor

touchscreen to simplify the interface, while all functions have been grouped into three distinct sections to allow quick operations: the upper ones for the major functions of the infotainment system, the central ones for climate and heating controls, and the lower ones for driver assistant controls.

The cabin is a comfortable place to be and

the driver's seat has been lowered by 3cm, meaning the instruments fall neatly to hand. There's plenty of adjustment for both seat and steering wheel to make sure you find the best position too.

For a big car the Insignia is surprising agile both in town and on demanding country roads and gives combined fuel figures of 65mpg

and CO₂ emissions of 112g/km. There's a top speed of 127mph and 0-60mph in 10.9 seconds.

But most of all there's more room than you are ever likely to need and an easy-to-manage combination of seat placements to help cover just about every eventuality making this Vauxhall a real player in the sector.

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TNS start Conference with clash at Druids

Fixture unveiled for the second phase of the JD Welsh Premier season will see The New Saints start with a trip to near rivals Cefn Druids.

The defending champions are well placed to lift the crown for a record breaking seventh consecutive time after forging a 12-point lead at the top with just 10 games remaining.

They launch their campaign in the Championship Conference, which contains the league's top six sides, with a visit to the Druids on Friday, February 2 (7.45).

Newtown, who will be playing in the Championship play-off (which involves the bottom six sides), travel to Llandudno for their first outing on Saturday, February 3.

The following Friday, the Saints entertain Bangor City, while Newtown visit Carmarthen on the Saturday (February 10).

The season ends on Friday, April 27, with TNS hosting Cardiff Met and Newtown away to Aberystwyth Town.

Meanwhile, Blackpool have loaned former TNS striker Scott Quigley to Wrexham, five months after signing the 25-year-old for an initial fee of £35,000, potentially rising to £50,000.

Since arriving at Bloomfield Road, Quigley has made nine substitute appearances for the Tangerines.

The forward is a product of the TNS Scholarship Scheme, and spent much of season 2011/12 in a successful loan spell at Caersws, and was awarded a two-year contract by the Saints in the summer of 2012.

Loaned to Carmarthen Town in October 2012, Quigley then joined Cefn Druids for season 2013/14.

Rovers close gap at top as weather wins

WATERLOO Rovers made up ground on the pacesetters in the Montgomeryshire League division one after beating the weather to inflict a 3-0 defeat on Maesyrhandir.

Goals from Tom Ellis, Charlie Proctor and Andrew Gwilt sealed the victory that took fourth placed Rovers to within two points of pole position - although the defending champions have played several more games than their rivals.

With the fixture list decimated by a string of postponements due to the rain and snow, Trewern United made the most of their action as they overcame Llanfyllin Town 3-2 to climb up to fifth in the table.

Shaun Roberts led the way with a brace, with Joe Beddoes also on the mark for the victors.

Waterlogged pitches following rain and snow led to the rest of the league's fixture list being postponed.

Saints called off - twice

LOOKING to maintain their revival in the West Midlands League division one, St Martins were frustrated by the wintry weather when their clash at Worcester Raiders was postponed due to an unfit surface.

The Saints were chasing a fifth successive league win, and six in all competitions, but persistent snow and rain forced an early call off.

They had arranged a friendly with Shrewsbury Juniors at SCAT in a bid for much match action, but that game was abandoned with snow lying on the pitch.

With the majority of games being postponed, St Martins remain eighth in the table, and looking to make up more ground when they host Kington Town at Park Hall on Saturday (3pm).

Guilsfield roar back for four-star win

ASA Hamilton led the charge as Guilsfield roared back to win 4-2 at Holyhead Hotspur to move up to second spot in the Huws Gray Cymru Alliance.

Prospects did not look rosy for the Guils as the Anglesey hosts took an early two-goal lead when capitalising on a loose clearance and then a penalty following a foul by Andy Ford.

But the villagers, after their slow start in heavy conditions, turned it around in terrific style with Hamilton making his mark with a hat-trick, with two of his goals coming from the penalty spot.

Victory, in tough conditions, now sees Nathan Leonard's side in second spot, six points adrift of league leaders Caernarfon Town

The Guils had travelled to Anglesey without the suspended Adam Jenkins, and the injured Robbie James and Jack Richards, but welcomed back Stuart Rogers from suspension. There had been a doubt over the game being played following torrential rain, but it was given the go-ahead despite the reservations of the Holyhead groundsman.

The visitors soon found themselves two goals down in a shaky start, but showed plenty of resolve to claw their way back with a stirring all round team display. With Jake Cook a livewire on the left, the Mid Walians got a foothold in the game with Chris Cathrall pulling one back before Hamilton equalised from the spot after Sam Litchfield had been wrestled

to the ground from a corner.

Hamilton then added his second penalty after being brought down in the box himself for a 3-2 half time lead, before completing his hat-trick in the second half when outmuscling the defence to round the keeper and slot in.

The villagers are due to be back at Holyhead on Saturday for their delayed first round tie in the Huws Gray Cup. The winners face a trip to Porthmadog in the quarter-finals.

Lowly Caersws again suffered at the hands of the weather as their home clash with Holywell Town was postponed due to a waterlogged pitch at the Recreation Ground.

No doubting Thomas who leads way in goals chart

WELSHPOOL'S Will Thomas is the leading hot-shot in the Spar Mid Wales League division one at the mid-point of the season.

The forward is topping the goalscoring charts after netting 21 times, with 20 coming in the league and one in cup competitions.

He is six ahead of Knighton Town's Connor Bird who has 15, all in the league, while former Berriew forward Richard Davies (now with Caersws) is third with 14, including 12 in the league and two in cup competitions.

The charts, which include all goals netted up to December, see Carno's Peter Rees also on 14 while Welshpool's Adam Davies is 13, with 11 coming in the league and two in the cup.

Four players are on 12, including Kerry's Max McLaughlin, all his goals in the league, while Ricky Litchfield (Welshpool) and Dan Graham (Llanrhedr) both have 11.

Joe Haycock (Churchstoke), Ian Probert (Welshpool) and Kerry's Luke Mumford are all on 10, while Llanrhedr's Khyam Wyton has nine.

Llansantffraid Village marksman Nathan Prodrig is leading the way in division two with 19 goals, four ahead of Richie Powell (Builth Wells).

*Title chasing Llanrhedr's big clash at Carno in division one was one of several games to succumb to a waterlogged pitch as the weather again disrupted the Spar Mid Wales League's fixture list.

Leaders Welshpool Town were also sidelined, while Llanfair United's trip to Kerry and Churchstoke's home clash with Llandrindod Wells were other victims of the weather.

Berriew, who have lost prolific striker Richard Davies to Caersws, were also without any action as their encounter away to Tywyn Bryncrug was called off due to a saturated surface.

With their title rivals without any action, third placed Llanidloes Town took the chance to make up ground with an excellent 2-0 victory away to Knighton Town.

First half goals from George Clarke and Gareth Owen proved enough to secure the spoils, but victory was tainted by the dismissal of Rhys Evans for his second booking after the break when kicking the ball away in frustration. Llani are now just four points adrift of front runners Welshpool with a game in hand.

Basement side Machynlleth slipped deeper into relegation danger after their 2-0 defeat against Radnor Valley on the 3G at Aberystwyth's Park Avenue ground.

Llansantffraid Village suffered their first defeat of the season in division two when edged out 1-0 at promotion rivals Aberystwyth University.

James Watts scored the only goal of the game midway through the second half and, despite their efforts, there was no way back for the villagers in what was an often scrappy game played in heavy conditions.

Llansantffraid remain five points adrift of leaders Builth Wells - and now on the same number of games - after the Spa side's fixture with Brecon Northcote was called off. Difffryn Banw continue to flirt with the lower half of the table after their 3-0 reverse at Hay St Mary's.

TNS Ladies are frozen off

TNS Ladies' home clash at Burton Albion Ladies in the Women's FA Premier League Midlands division one was postponed due to unsafe travelling conditions following snow and ice.

The lack of action kept the Saints in second spot, one point behind leaders Loughborough Foxes Ladies.

New Saints lift Cup for the ninth time

FOOTBALL by John Bridgwater

JAMIE Mullan's second half strike saw The New Saints taste more glory in the Nathaniel MG Cup with a 1-0 victory over Cardiff Met University in the final at Aberystwyth's Park Avenue.

The holders dominated throughout, but failed to take their chances before winger Mullan pounced for the only goal of the game in the 64th minute as the Saints lifted the trophy for a fourth consecutive season.

The goal epitomised TNS' performance with precise interplay seeing Alex Darlington chest down Jon Routledge's pass on the edge of the box before slipping the ball to Mullan who cut in from the right before firing across keeper Will Fuller from eight yards.

It was no less than the Welsh Premier leaders deserved after making the running from the first whistle against spirited and well-drilled opponents.

As well as winning the cup four times on the bounce, it was the ninth time that the Saints had lifted the trophy in their history - and the first piece of silverware for manager Scott Ruscoe and his assistant Steve Evans since taking the reins from Craig Harrison in the summer.

"I've won it as a player and assistant, but it's pleasing to win your first trophy as a manager as it continues the good work of your predecessor," said Ruscoe.

"It's nice to get the first one. It's a different feeling as a manager, but hopefully this is only the start as we've got two other cups and also the league to go for this season."

"Cardiff Met were well organised and fit, and have a great team ethic, but I thought we dominated the game possession wise and fully deserved to win."

Chances

"We had enough chances, and you're just hoping one would go in, and after that it was a case of seeing the game out."

"In the first half, we must have had 75-80 per cent possession. We played some terrific football, got in behind them, and never let them have a sniff."

TNS were soon on the front foot from the start, and sounded an early warning with Connell Rawlinson's back post header cleared off the line from a left wing corner.

The towering defender then saw another headed effort tipped over the bar by keeper Fuller as the Saints continued to prove a handful on both flanks.

The pace of Mullan on the right threatened to unlock the door with the students forced into some desperate defending to keep their goal intact.

Darlington, starting in place of the injured top scorer Greg Draper, blazed over while Aeron Edwards also drove his shot well over moments later.

The holders continued to call the tune with incisive passing and swift movement, but were unable to find a decisive finish from several promising raids.

Despite their early dominance, the Saints were given a reprieve just past the half hour when the students had the ball in the net through Dan Spencer following a swift counter attack only to be denied by the offside flag.

The second half continued in similar vein, with the Archers kept at an arm's length, and the Saints continuing to strive for the elusive

Changing of guard at golf club



Oswestry Golf Club's new captains line up ahead of the 2018 season - (from left) Margaret Dunbar (ladies vice captain), Steve Ashworth (men's captain), Marie Male (ladies captain) and Mike Dearing (men's vice captain)

OSWESTRY Golf Club is looking to attract a new breed of golfer with flexible membership options.

Stocked shop are now offering a range of membership options to get more people into golf.

For those who maybe struggle for time or can't warrant the cost of full membership, their lifestyle membership option offers all the benefits of full membership, but at a fraction of the price.

Social scene

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whether golf club membership is right for them the club is offering a three-month trial option. For £150, players can get a great feel for the club, the course and the social aspect.

All new members also get a 10 per cent shop or bar credit as well as a half priced lesson from the PGA pro Richard Edwards, to ensure they get the maximum out of their game.

For further details, contact club secretary John Evans on 01691-61035 or pop into the pro shop and speak to one of the welcoming team or check out the website - Oswestrygolfclub.co.uk

breakthrough.

Edwards sent one effort over and then being denied by Fuller with a crisp volley, before the breakthrough that threatened finally arrived courtesy of Mullan who finished with aplomb from a tight angle after being set up by Darlington.

The Saints had further opportunities, and went agonisingly close to adding a second on 71 minutes when Ryan Brobbel crossed deftly from the left byline, the ball falling invitingly for Darlington whose volley from

10 yards rattled the post.

The Archers gave it their best shot, but rarely suggested they could find a way back despite their efforts as Ruscoe's men held firm with relative comfort to continue their dominance of the competition in recent times.

Meanwhile, goalscorer Mullan and defender Blaine Hudson have agreed two-year extensions to their contracts, which secures their services with the Saints until the end of the 2019/20 season.

Ellesmere boss calls time after cup defeat

ELLESMORE Rangers manager Richard Brown resigned following his side's 4-1 defeat to FC Oswestry Town in a TJ Vickers Shropshire Cup quarter-final.

Rangers have won one game in their last four in all competitions and Brown decided it was his time to step aside.

"I've put in a lot of work and threatened to leave before but I think now was the right time for me to walk away and leave someone else to take up the job. I took them as far as I could," he said.

"Player commitment wasn't there, certain individuals were not putting the work in and I can't continue it."

"I told the lads after the game and I think a few of them were shell-shocked. I work all week preparing for games Saturday and Tuesday and all we ask is for the lads to turn up and give 100 per cent and unfortunately some don't".

Brown, who turned down the manager's job at Evo-Stik South League side Market Drayton Town in December, has no immediate plans for the future.

"I'm planning to have a break now and hopefully something will come up. I'll be keeping on the lookout for something," he added.

Rangers director of football Alan Davis said: "We're very disappointed with the result at Oswestry, we didn't do ourselves justice."

"We were expecting it to be honest (Brown's resignation). I need to talk to the committee before I can comment any further, but I'm not worried about the future of the club".

Pool and COBRA storm to victory

RUGBY by John Bridgwater

WELSHPOOL boosted their chances of survival in rugby's Welsh League division two (north) after overcoming an early deficit to sink Rhyl 17-5 at Maesdyre.

Looking to build on their 23-17 success at basement rivals Llangollen the week before, Pool had found themselves trailing to an unconverted touchdown.

But they stormed back by running in three tries themselves to clinch a victory that took them out of the bottom two places, while avenging a defeat on the north Wales coast earlier in the season.

Pool are now one point above struggling Llangollen who failed to raise a side for their trip to Llanidloes, while they are seven points above rock bottom Abergele who themselves claimed a surprise 15-0 home success against Newtown.

The Maesdyre men can take plenty of heart from their latest performance as they prepare for another tough clash at promotion hopefuls Wrexham on Saturday.

After Rhyl had taken the lead in heavy conditions at Maesdyre, Pool hit back with second row Ryan Goodwin crossing for the first score to level matters at the break.

Nip and tuck

It was nip and tuck after the interval on an increasingly testing surface, but Pool's improved level of fitness came to the fore as they scored two late tries.

Prop Tom Manuel went over for a second score as Pool's forwards began to turn the screw and a superb break by captain and scrum half Joe Stranks sealed back-to-back wins.

COBRA pepped up their promotion push in the Welsh League division two (north) with a hard-fought 18-6 home success over close rivals Wrexham to avenge their only league defeat this season.

The Meifod side remain fourth, but are just three points off second placed Shotton with a game in hand as the chase for runners-up spot behind runaway leaders Denbigh hots up.

Both sides were looking to bounce back from defeats in the Swalec Bowl the week before, and a tricky snow covered pitch limited free flowing rugby.

But COBRA, who head to Bangor on Saturday, steadily compiled points to secure what could prove a crucial victory in the race for second place.

Wrexham struck first with a penalty, but the Llanfair hosts hit back with the first of two tries from centre Rich Roberts, converted by fullback Will Worthington.

Penalties from Worthington and Rhodri Jones saw the Llanfair side lead 13-6 in increasingly tough conditions, with Wrexham staying in the hunt with a kick themselves.

A crucial second try came from Roberts who kicked a loose ball through from inside his own half before winning the race to touch down.

COBRA held firm after that to deny the visitors a bonus point, despite finishing the game with 13 players following yellow cards forwards Matt Launder and Steven Isaac.



Scrum half Lloyd Mayor spins the ball out to launch another COBRA attack and (below) full-back Will Worthington catches the ball as the snow falls during COBRA's win against Wrexham



Skipper shows way in Arddleen win

SHOOTING by John Bridgwater

THE second week of shooting in the Montgomeryshire and District League after the Christmas break saw few surprises as the top teams all recorded victory - some by large margins and some by rather the opposite.

Away teams seemed to take the rub of the green, with only one side, Crew Green B, recording a home victory.

Arddleen's shooters took their match at a canter after their hosts Forden were unable to answer the confidence shown by Richard Lewis' shooters.

The captain led by example, shooting last to bang a 35.4 nail into Forden's coffin. The match finished 180.5 to 202.0, with Arddleen's young Jack Francis claiming yet another possible (35.3).

A depleted six-man Churchstoke team made hard going of their visit to Gwilsfield B, shooting below their average but nevertheless managing to edge the match by the tiniest of margins - 0.2 of a point.

The hosts, on the other hand, excelled themselves, recording a score nearly seven points higher than their average of 194.4.

Jane Thomas scored the visitors' only possible, a 35.2, while GB's final shooter, P Edwards, took

keep their eyes on the ball to win.

This they did, with Roger Knight finding the bull with every shot, his final score being 35.4 points.

Crew Green B recorded the only home victory of the evening as they held off Castle Caereinion to log their fifth win of the season.

The final tally was 199.7 points to 196.8, with the ever-reliable Joe Hilditch shooting the highest score of the evening, an excellent 35.6. CGB's recent results show that they are fully deserving of their current fourth place in the league table.

The week's possibles were Jane Thomas (35.2), Jack Thomas and P Edwards (35.3), Edward Kelton, Roger Knight and Richard Lewis (35.4) and Joe Hilditch (35.6).

Match of the week was Forden against Arddleen, in which the widest margin of victory that the league has seen in some time was gained by Arddleen who showed they've still got it.

Shooter of the week was young Joe Hilditch (35.6) who showed such maturity, focus and determination during his lynch-pin display against Castle Caereinion.

The latet returns from Shropshire golf clubs

Mile End

Team Texas Scramble: 1 Bob Sharpe, Peter Mader, Shaun Holloway 64.5; 2 Tim Parkes, Stuart Paterson, Mick Pierce 64.8; 3. Ben Moody, Keith Evans, Di Bradbury 64.8.

4BBB Team Comp: 1 Rickie Burke, Ben Power, Kev Jones, Phil Griffiths 93pts; 2 John Northwood, Cathie O'Gorman, Tim Parkes, Mick Pierce 88pts; 3 Neil Exton, Ken McBrien, Roy Roberts, Stuart Paterson 84pts.

Nine Hole Social: 1 Stuart Rogers, Richard Meyer, Di Bradbury 82pts; 2 Angela Eke, Paul Eke, Paul Dring 75pts.

Christmas Eve Social: 1 Bill Murray, Stuart Ball, Gary Harper, Angela Eke 121pts; 2 Di Bradbury, Anna Pugh, John Turner, Roy Adkins 109pts; 3 Bob Grovesock-Thompson, Ron Pugh, Sheila Russell, Stuart Rogers 109pts.

Christmas Social: 1 Simon Hayman, Ron Pugh, Carol Slater 67pts; 2 Stuart Ball, Bryan Jones, Angela Eke 63pts; 3 John Currie, Dave Smith, Amanda Ord 60pts.

Llanymynech

Ladies' Captain Drive-in: 1 Ann Garbett 22pts; 2 Gwenan Davies 21pts; 3 Chris Thomas 21pts.

Hill Valley

Turkey Trot: 1 J Fairlamb 39 pts (12); 2 G Valentine 38 pts (12); 3 C Huxley 38 pts (12).

Winter League: 1 M Fowles & N Ashley 48 pts; 2 P Chidlow & M McCluskey 45 pts; 3 R Wynne & P Dutton 44 pts.

Wrekin

Seniors' Winter Stableford (15 Hole): 1 Derek Taylor 27/17; 2 Dave Rogerson 26/15; 3 Roger Oliver 25/20.

The Shropshire

Stableford - division 1: 1 Ryan Eagleton; 2 Jack Burns; 3 Gareth Coutts. Division 2: 1 Gary Barton; 2 Adam Sullivan; 3 Tom Williams (43/2). Division 3: 1 Neil Lloyd; 2 Emlyn Thomas; 3 Timothy Mason.

Ladies Stableford: 1 Azusa Konno; 2 Trish McGloin; 3 Ann Mountford.

Seniors' Yellow Medal - division 1: 1 Colin K. Johnson; 2 Malcolm Tubbett; 3 John Stuart Roberts. Division 2: 1 Bob Beale; 2 Anthony Weaver; 3 David Smyth.

Oswestry

Am-Am Stableford: 1 Dorothy Mottram, Alma Barker, Jenny Lloyd 74pts; 2 Margaret Shakeshaft, Pat Talbot, Loren Dearing 55pts.

Spider-man checks in to lend support

SHROPSHIRE chess players are enlisting the help of their own "spiderman" to achieve success in national competition, writes TOBY NEAL.

Carl Portman, who was part of the all-conquering Telford-based Coddon team in the 1990s, winning the league title six times on the trot, has joined the squad for the county's teams in the Four Nations Chess League.

Portman, who moved away from Shropshire, is a spiders expert and has also played a leading role in taking chess behind bars, as volunteer manager for prisoners at the English Chess Federation.

In the latest round of 4NCL matches, Shropshire 1 performed well, drawing with top seed Warwickshire Select 2 and beating Manchester Manticores 3, despite Charles Higgle being stuck in a traffic jam resulting in the Salopians, losing that board by default and under the rules of the competition being hit by an additional penalty point.

The Shropshires' second team were outraged in round 3 against Holmes Chapel.

Nat Paul, Shropshire 4NCL organiser, said: "However, they gave them a good battle which resulted in two good draws for Chris Lewis and Windsor Peck and an excellent win for Dave Bennion on board one."

The next match weekend is at Bolton on February 10 and 11.

In Shropshire Chess League, the leading pair, Oswestry A and Newport A, are matching each other blow for blow, both scoring 4-1 wins, while Wellington A have lifted themselves off the bottom of the table, despite a late cry-off through flu of board two Colin Roberts, with John Storey - now recovered from his recent heart attack - stepping in at the last minute to ensure they could field a full team.

In Division Three, Oswestry B have drawn level with Telford B at the top of the table.

Sport

Golf
It's all change at
Oswestry – P38

Rugby
COBRA and Pool
shine in snow – P39



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Lions legend
special guest
with COBRA



Wales' record try scorer Shane Williams with club chairman Trevor Jones at COBRA's gentleman's dinner

AFTER back-to-back wins, Welshpool's rugby players will look to maintain the momentum in the Welsh League division two (north) when they head to promotion hopefuls Wrexham on Saturday.

Pools' 17-5 success over Rhyl lifted the Maesdyre side out of the bottom two places after basement rivals Llangollen were unable to fulfil their fixture at Llanidloes.

Points, however, promise to be hard earned this weekend against a Wrexham side who will be out to get their promotion push back on track after their 18-6 reverse at snowy COBRA last weekend.

COBRA, lying fourth and three points off second place with games in hand, will aim to keep their challenge in the trip to Bangor.

OSWESTRY are still seeking their first win of 2018 in the South Lancs and Cheshire Two after their clash with Wigan was postponed due to snow on the Granville Park pitch.

The Eagles are away to promotion chasing Liverpool Collegiate on Saturday as they look to cement their place in the upper reaches of the table.

The second team, who lost 24-17 at Northwich III in the North West League division four (south), welcome Whitchurch III.

Wales and British Lions wing legend Shane Williams was special guest at COBRA's annual gentleman's dinner held at Llanfair Sports Centre.

Quigley gets one over his old boss

FORMER TNS striker Scott Quigley got the better of his old boss Craig Harrison after popping up with two second half strikes for Wrexham.

Quigley joined the Dragons on loan from Blackpool earlier in the week, and proved an instant hit on his debut to help secure a 2-0 victory at Harrison's Hartlepool.

The frontman pounced on some poor Pools defending in the second half to score two breakaway goals and ensure the hosts have now gone nine games without a win.

VILLAGERS EYE MORE CUP JOY

FOOTBALL by John Bridgwater

THE spotlight again falls on Llanrhaeadr as the villagers hunt another scalp when Bangor City arrive at the Recreation Field for Saturday's JD Welsh Cup fourth round tie (1.30).

The Spar Mid Wales League club reached the last 16 of the national cup for only the second time in their history after pulling off a shock 3-2 win over Cefn Druids in the previous round.

And their reward is a crack at another Welsh Premier side when they tackle the big guns of Bangor City who are the eight time winners.

Despite dispatching the Druids in the last round, the villagers will be under no illusions they face an even sterner test against the Citizens this weekend. But home advantage in likely heavy conditions will give them hope of pulling off another giant killing act as they look to reach the quarter-finals for the first time.

Their route to the last 16 saw the team - managed by Graham Evans and Marc Griffiths - overcome Kerry 3-1, Queens Park 3-0 and Caerwys 2-1 in the previous rounds before ousting Cefn Druids.

Chairman Mel Roberts says the club have been busy preparing the ground for the arrival of both Bangor and the S4C TV cameras that will be showing highlights of the game.

"We've had an army of helpers working on the ground," he said. "We've not played on the pitch since just after Christmas, so the pitch is fine, although a bit wet, but hopefully it will dry out this week."

"We've got everyone available, and the players will be fired up for the challenge. There will be big crowd, and hopefully we can give Bangor an uncomfortable afternoon."

"We wanted a tie against a big name club like Bangor, and we've got it, so it could not have worked out any better. It's going to be a fantastic day for our club and the village."

Six times winners THE NEW SAINTS are in action the night before when they make a potentially tricky trip to Cymru Alliance outfit Caernarfon Town on Friday (7.45).

The tie pits together the sides who are the current pace-setters of their respective leagues, with the high flying Canaries underlining their credentials with a 2-0 home victory over Barry Town United in the previous round.

The two camps met in a thrilling Welsh Cup tie three years ago at the Oval, with TNS hitting back from a two goal deficit to emerge 3-2 victors.

And boss Scott Ruscoe, whose side had few problems in sweeping aside Penrhyncoch 6-0 in the previous round, knows there can be no half measures if they are to progress to the quarter-finals.

"Caernarfon will be a tough game, it's on grass and their pitch is not the greatest," he said.

Yabba Aber doo! TNS win cup



Let us spray – TNS celebrate their victory at Aberystwyth's Park Avenue. Pic: Brian Jones.

SCOTT Ruscoe was delighted to pick up his first piece of managerial silverware as The New Saints retained the Nathaniel MG Cup with a 1-0 final victory over Cardiff Met at Aberystwyth.

A second half strike from winger Jamie Mulvaney was enough to separate the sides, with the Saints claiming the cup for a fourth consecutive season, and ninth time in their history.

It was the first trophy for Ruscoe and his assistant Steve Evans after taking over from Craig Harrison in the summer.

"We played some fantastic football, it could have been three or four-nil, but in the end I'm just happy to win the cup," said Ruscoe.

"It's pleasing to get your first trophy as a manager and continue the good work my predecessor left behind. I've won the trophy before as a player and as assistant, but this is a different feeling."

"We fully deserved to win. In the first half we had 75-80 per cent possession, played some great football and never gave them a sniff."

"We had enough chances, and you're just hoping one would go in."

"It's nice to get the first one, but hopefully

this is only the start as we've got two other cups and also the league to go for this season."

"Cardiff Met were well organised and fit, and a great team ethic, but I thought we dominated the game and fully deserved to win."

Meanwhile, the Saints have bolstered their squad with two new signings with an international flavour - forwards Dean Ebbe and Kevin Dauber.

Dublin-born Ebbe, 23 - who came on as a second half in the Nathaniel Cup final win - began his career at Shamrock Rovers. He has since played for Longford Town, Athlone Town, Cabinteely and Bluebell United before moving to Inverness Caledonian Thistle in 2017.

Dauber is a 22-year-old Estonian forward who has represented his country at all levels from under-16 to under-23, and has twice made the bench for the senior side against Andorra and Lithuania.

Having played in Finland, Latvia and Slovenia as well as his native Estonia, he won the Latvian Cup with FK Jelgava in 2015/16.

Kauber spent the first half of last season in Latvia with the Jelgava before being loaned to Estonia's FC Levadia.

Town striker Harris moves to Guilsfield

STRIKER Jack Harris, top scorer with FC Oswestry Town this season, has left the club to join Cymru Alliance outfit Guilsfield.

Harris has netted 14 times in the Hallmark North West Counties League division one this term, as well as a hat-trick in last week's 4-1 victory over Ellesmere Rangers in the TJ Vickers Cup quarter-final.

But the forward has now departed Park Hall to bolster a Guilsfield side chasing honours in the Cymru Alliance.

It will be his second spell with the villagers, and manager Nathan Leonard is delighted to get the forward on board.

"Jack has been at the club before, and wanted to come back to us," he said. "He has matured as a player, has shown he can score goals, so we're happy to bring him in to strengthen the squad. We now just have to wait for international clearance before he can play."

The arrival of Harris will further boost the Guils who maintained their challenge with last weekend's 4-2 victory at Holyhead Hotspur, having been two goals down early on.

The villagers had travelled to Holyhead with just 13 players, with manager Nathan Leonard and former boss Danny Barton on the bench.

"We made a poor start, but that seemed to wake us up, and after that we adjusted to the conditions and dominated the game," added Leonard.

After travelling to Holyhead last Saturday, the Guils are back in Anglesey this weekend for a delayed league cup first round encounter. The winners will be away to Porthmadog in the last eight.

Before then, they are due to visit Llanidloes Town in the fourth round of the Central Wales Challenge Cup on Wednesday night.

Like many sides, Town had no action on Saturday as their home clash with Prestwch Heys was postponed with snow on the 3G Park Hall pitch. They visit Holker Old Boys this weekend.

Welshpool looking to open gap at top

IT'S top versus bottom when high flying Welshpool Town entertain lowly Machynlleth in the Spar Mid Wales League division one on Saturday (2.30).

Having seen their lead at the top trimmed to three points, the pacesetters will want to get back on track with a winning display at Maesdyre.

Like several other sides, Pool were frustrated by the weather last weekend, but a win against Mach would see them move six points clear of Llanrhaeadr who are involved in the Welsh Cup.

Berriew entertain Carno in the only other first division action.

Several clubs are involved in the Central Wales Cup on Saturday (1.30), with Kerry heading to Llanfair United, while Waterloo Rovers entertain Dwyfryn Banw and Churchstoke host Builth Wells.

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